

An analysis of Qur'anic themes in five Persian poets
of the 5th/11th - 6th/12th centuries,
with comparative reference to Arabic 'Abbasid Poetry.

BY

ṢAFĀ' MUṢṬAFĀ ABŪ TĀLIB

In Fulfilment of the requirements
For the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London
APRIL 1988

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TO THE FOND MEMORY OF MY PARENTS
HOPING I HAVE FULFILLED ONE OF THEIR DEAREST WISHES

ABSTRACT

The present thesis analyses the extensive utilisation of Qur'anic materials by ^CUnṣurī, Farrukhī, Manūchehrī, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī and Anvarī, and seeks to determine the degree to which it may be seen as a particular thematic development within Persian poetry rather than as part of a literary tradition developed from Arabic models.

The introduction is followed by a comprehensive statistical survey of Qur'anic references in the Persian poets, with, for comparison, a similar survey covering the work of five Arab poets: Abū Nuwās, Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Abū Tammām, al-Buḥturī and al-Mutanabbī.

Each of the following chapters covers a particular thematic area and, where appropriate, is internally subdivided according to the individual episodes. The first major thematic area to be treated is that of Paradise. This is followed by an extensive survey of the materials relating to the prophets, principally Moses, Jesus and Solomon. A third chapter considers miscellaneous other Qur'anic references.

Each of these three chapters is organised along similar lines: an initial statistical survey giving a comprehensive listing of the individual citations is followed by general

remarks on the context of use and a more detailed commentary on verses of particular literary and thematic interest. Arab and Persian usage is compared, and attention drawn to aspects of rhetorical technique.

The implication of the findings yielded by the above investigation is discussed in the final summary. This seeks to evaluate how far the themes and techniques observed in the Persian poets are also present in the dīwāns of five major ^CAbbasid poets who, on the one hand, were clearly known to the Persian poets under consideration (and hence a model for them), and, on the other, represent a period when Islamic culture and, specifically, knowledge of the Qur'anic text, had become a standard ingredient of literary training, and hence available for exploitation alongside more traditional materials of poetic discourse.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound and deep gratitude to both the Egyptian government and CAYN Shams University for awarding me a scholarship to study in the United Kingdom. I am especially indebted to my supervisors, Professor Gandjei and Dr. Wright, for the advice and guidance they have given me most willingly throughout the period of my study. Without their encouragement, support and numerous stimulating comments and advice, this study would never have been completed.

INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that early Persian poetry remains indebted to Arabic poetry, not merely in such technical areas as form and prosody but also for its principal themes and for the stylistic and rhetorical techniques through which these are elaborated. However, it is also recognized that the Persian poets were, at the same time, innovators, developing inherited materials in new ways.

The present thesis is, in part, a comparative study, contrasting in a given thematic area the different techniques employed by Arab and Persian poets and endeavouring to determine the extent to which Arab models were or were not followed by the Persians and, consequently, also the extent to which the latter may be judged to have either developed in a new direction or to have stressed, within the range of common elements, one particular area over another. At the same time, it may be viewed as a study of innovation with particular reference to Persian poetry, tracing the ways in which new thematic elements were integrated into the traditional poetic fabric. The first impulse towards an examination of the specific subject matter through which these various developments are assessed was given by an earlier study by the present writer on Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī,⁽¹⁾ whose dīwān

exhibited an unexpectedly high incidence of Qur'anic reference. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to compare Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī in the first instance with other major Persian poets of the same period to see whether the same feature was to be found among them, too. In all, five Persian poets are examined here in chronological order, ^CUnṣurī, Farrukhī, Manūchehrī, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī and Anvarī. The selection of these five was dictated by both historical and aesthetic considerations. All are major figures, and the close similarities between their respective dīwāns ensure a broad identity of approach in both style and subject matter. Chronologically they are close, but were chosen to provide even coverage of a period (from c.400 to c.500 A.H.)⁽²⁾ rather than the more intensive study of a single generation that a different selection could have provided.

As a further step, both the statistical incidence of Qur'anic references and the study of the stylistics of their employment are extended in a broad comparative survey allowing similarities and differences to be noted between the above Persian poets and a central group of Arab poets chosen from among their most prominent ^CAbbasid predecessors: Abū Tammām, Abū Nuwās, al-Mutanabbī, al-Buḥturī and Abū al-^CAtāhiya. The works of the first four provided models for their Persian counterparts to emulate in their major subject area, madīḥ. Abū al-^CAtāhiya, on the other hand, was deliberately chosen for contrast: his

religious poetry constitutes a totally different forum for the literary utilization of Qur'anic motifs, and thus stands not only as a model of another possible approach, but as a control corpus against which some of the usages of the madīh poets can be judged. Given that these great ʿAbbāsīd poets were clearly, and specially in their panegyric odes, models for the Persian poets to emulate and strive to surpass, it would seem a priori likely that matching patterns of incidence and usage would suggest that the Persian poets were imitating and prolonging a pre-existing Arab practice, while significant deviation would suggest strongly further development and innovation on the part of the Persian successor poets.

A further major attraction of the Qur'anic materials on all these poets was the simple fact of the relative neglect they had suffered in previous critical literature, despite the voluminous amount of published research on the Persian as well as the Arab poets. Indeed, no single work appears to have been devoted specifically to this subject.

U.M. Daudpota's seminal work entitled "The Influence Of Arabic Poetry On The Development Of Persian Poetry" surveys the evolution of Arabic poetry, and then discusses such topics as the verse forms borrowed by the Persians from the Arabs, the Persian qaṣīda composed in the metre and rhyme of some well known Arabic qaṣīdas, and concludes with an examination of Persian elements in Arabic poetry. But it

pays little or no attention to the poets' treatment of the particular thematic areas provided by prophetic, paradisaical and other Qur'anic material.

Such also proves to be largely the case with the other works covering the lives, culture and dīwāns of the Persian poets under consideration. J.W. Clinton, for example, writing on the tradition of court poetry, tends to concentrate on the technical aspects and style of the poet.⁽³⁾ Victor Al-Kik, in his work on the influence of Arabic culture on Manūchehrī's poetry, entitled Ta'thīr-i Farhang-i Arab Dar Ash'ār-i Manūchehrī Dāmghānī draws attention to the poet's use of Qur'anic references on 42 occasions without going into any analysis of the imagery, and M.A. Husein in his M.A. entitled "The Influence Of Arabic Culture On The Persian Poet Manūchehrī" refers but fleetingly to the poet's treatment of Qur'anic material.

Two theses by 'Afāf al-Sayyid Zīdān, an M.A. on 'Unṣurī and a PhD on Farrukhī, deal in the main with the two poets' lives, their culture, and their relationship with their respective patrons, whilst providing a political, social and economic background against which the writer's discussions take place.⁽⁴⁾

Among other individual studies of the Persian poets may be mentioned those by Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mun'im on Manūchehrī,⁽⁵⁾ Aḥmad Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Hilmī on

Anvarī,⁽⁶⁾ and the present writer on Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, all of which pay but scanty attention to the Qur'anic material.

Islamic themes and the use of Qur'anic references are also only rarely touched upon in the critical literature on the Arab poets. One obvious exception is the chapter entitled "The Impact Of The Qur'ān And Hadīth On Medieval Arabic Literature" in the Cambridge History Of Arabic Literature in which reference is made to works of Abū Tammām, Abū Nuwās, Abū al-^CAtāhiya, al-Mutanabbī and al-Buḥturī and their usage of Qur'anic material. This survey certainly gives a general idea of the extent to which Qur'anic themes and vocabulary occur in ^CAbbasid poetry, but does not attempt any analysis of the poetic use to which these are put. Also relevant is the article on Islamic Kingship and Arabic Panegyric poetry⁽⁷⁾ which discusses the extent to which madīḥ material addressed to prominent personages reflects Islamic concepts of authority, but does not address itself to the question of how far Islamic vocabulary is employed, and to what stylistic effect.

Of the remaining scholarly literature,⁽⁸⁾ it may reasonably be said that, for all the analytical acumen displayed, little contribution is made to discussion of the particular issues with which this thesis is concerned. It,

therefore, relies far less on pursuing a critique of previous scholarship than on direct confrontation with the dīwāns of the ten poets in question. It is in this sense a prolongation and, at the same time, a widening in scope of a previous study by the present writer which was concerned with just one poet, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, in whose dīwān the incidence of Qur'anic references seemed unexpectedly high. Perusal of the other dīwāns reveals, however, that Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī was by no means exceptional in this regard and the general richness of the material justifies not only an attempt to qualify the incidence for comparative purposes, but also an examination of the attitudes revealed therein towards the literary potential of the sacred text, and the particular rhetorical techniques through which reference to it was articulated.

FOOTNOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

- (1) Safā' Muṣṭafā Abū Tālib, Abū 'l Faraj al Rūnī, 'aṣruḥ wā bi'atuh wa shi'ruḥ ma' tarjamat mukhtārāt min dīwanih, M.A. thesis, Cairo, 1978.
- (2) Edward G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.II, London, 1906, pp.120, 360.
- (3) Jerome W. Clinton, The Divan of Manūchehrī Dāmghānī, A Critical Study, Minneapolis, 1972.
- (4) 'Afāf al-Sayyid Zidān, dirāsa 'an shā'ir al-Furs Abū 'l-Qāsim Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-'Unṣurī, M.A. thesis, Cairo, 1967, and Farrukhī al-Sistānī, 'aṣruḥ wa bi'atuh wa shi'ruḥ, Ph.D. thesis, Cairo, 1972.
- (5) Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mun'im, Manūchehrī al-Dāmghānī, 'aṣruḥ, hayātuh, diwānuh, Ph.D thesis, Cairo, 1967.
- (6) Aḥmad Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Hilmī, Awḥad al-Dīn al-Anwarī, 'aṣruḥ wa bi'atuh wa shi'ruḥ, Ph.D. thesis, Cairo, 1970.
- (7) S. Sperl, "Islamic Kingship", Journal of Arabic Literature, Vol.VIII, Leiden, 1977, pp.20-35.
- (8) M. Bedawi, "Abū Tammām's Ode on 'Amorium", Journal of Arabic Literature, Vol.9-10, 1978-79.
A. Badawi, Abū Tammām wa qaḍiyyat al-tajdīd fī al-shi'r, Cairo, 1975, pp.38, 39.
Zuhdī Ṣabrī al-Khāja, muwāzana bayn al-ḥikma fī shi'r al-Mutanabbī wa-'l-ḥikma fī shi'r Abi al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī, al-Riyāḍ, 1982.
Aḥlām al-Za'im, Abū Nuwās bayn al-'abath wa 'l-ightirāb wa-'l-tamarrud, Beirut, 1981.
'Alī Shalaq, Abū Nuwās bayn al-takhaṭṭī wa-'l-iltizām, Beirut, 1982.
Mawḥūb Muṣṭafāy, al-ramziyya 'ind al-Buḥturī, Algiers, 1982.

CHAPTER ONE

STATISTICAL SURVEY

The Persian poets, in common with their Arab counterparts of an earlier age, used Qur'anic references less for any overt religious purpose than to serve or reinforce a particular poetic concept. Such references may take the form of a direct quotation of a phrase or key word; a direct calque or translation of the Qur'anic Arabic into Persian; or may take the indirect form of paraphrase and allusion. Mention should further be made of the use of words and expressions which occur in the Qur'ān but - whether through prior usage or subsequent generalization - are at the same time so much a part of ordinary language that their appearance cannot necessarily be construed as a deliberate reference to a particular Qur'anic context: such material presents obvious problems for any attempt at quantification.

A further methodological problem is raised by the broad differences of approach between the Persian and Arab poets to the utilization of Qur'anic materials. The Arabs, for example, were less willing than the Persians to quote Qur'anic phraseology directly, preferring allusion and oblique reference. In some cases, consequently, the figures given indicate not so much the exact incidence of a

specific word as the level of a complex of related phrases and expressions and sometimes, indeed, of a general concept. Thus, in the table for Abū Nuwās, for example, al-qasam billah subsumes birabb yasīn, while under ṣalāh are included references to rukūʿ and sujūd.

Abū Nuwās may also serve to exemplify allusion or, in his case, parodic distortion. On numerous occasions, he takes a direct Qur'anic reference but changes or, rather, paraphrases it in such a way that the original Qur'anic text is no longer immediately present, such instances nearly all involving parody or deliberately impious inversion, e.g. the Qur'anic verse:

(1) وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ

'You do not wish for anything unless God wishes it.'

is clearly implied by its inverted form in:

(2) دارت على فتية ذل الزمان لهم
فما يصيبهم الا بما شاؤوا

'The wine is passed around the young men whose servant time is -
(God) only bestows on them what they desire.'

Elsewhere, the poet apes or reflects the structure of a

Qur'anic verse, substituting certain key words, but retains the structure to create a new verse of his own, as with the Qur'anic verse:

(3) قُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لِّنَبَأٍ لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

which is echoed in:

(4) قُولَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنَّا غَلَبْتَنِي زَنْدَقَةٌ وَكُفْرًا

What is largely true of Abū Nuwās' contribution applies to a lesser extent to al-Mutannabī's and Abū Tammām's with al-Buḥturī showing a distinct preference for direct Qur'anic reference in his dīwān (Abū al-^cAtāhiya will be discussed below). This predilection for indirect allusion in the dīwāns of the Arab poets makes for a more difficult, less precise quantification of verses into tables and it has, in that case, been decided to give separate entries for direct and indirect references, the former, therefore, providing more clear-cut and objectively reliable data on the basis of which percentage figures can be computed for the occurrence of a given word or motif.

Also, given that indirect reference is capable of assuming such varied forms, allusion, paraphrase, synonymy and parody, we have taken the further precaution of

omitting individual percentages for the tables analysing the incidence of this feature among the Arab poets: the element of subjective judgement is here too great to be relied on for comparative statistics from one poet to the next. It was, however, considered worthwhile providing an overall percentage figure relating the total of their respective dīwāns to the total number of Qur'anic references in order to facilitate global comparison with the equivalent figures for the Persian poets.

A problem of a different nature is raised by the dīwān of Abū al-^CAtāhiya. Not only is his pietistic or homiletic verse saturated with Qur'anic references, but there is also an extraordinarily high incidence of what may be termed general vocabulary not readily relatable to a particular Qur'anic locus. The sheer mass of material, in short, verges on the unmanageable, and since his poetry is, in any case, thematically and technically so far removed from the other materials being considered here, it was concluded that no useful comparative purpose would be served by an attempt at providing a total quantification of the Qur'anic citations and reflexes in his verse.

The Persian poets (for their part) show a high degree of direct reference to the Qur'ān in their dīwāns at the expense of allusion and other methods of indirect reference, this general unity of approach justifying the

conflation of direct and indirect reference which makes for a more precise quantification of the Persian statistics. At the same time, it becomes more meaningful for comparative purposes to supply the individual percentages for each poet. The overall percentage figures relate the total number of Qur'anic references to the total output of their respective dīwāns (i.e. to the total number of lines). These serve the dual purpose of providing global comparisons between the Persian and the Arab poets' dīwāns calculated on the same basis, and supplying objective data indicating differing patterns of utilization between individual Persian poets.

S T A T I S T I C A L
T A B L E S

P E R S I A N P O E T S

1) Unşurī

	Subject	No.of Repet- ition	Per- centage
1.	Mūsā (Moses)	9	8.56
2.	Sadd al-'Iskandar wa Ya'jūj	8	7.61
3.	Qawm ^C Ād wa al-rīḥ al-ṣarṣar	6	5.71
4.	al-Masīḥ wa mu ^C jizātuh (Jesus Christ & His miracles)	5	4.76
5.	Sulaymān (Solomon)	4	3.8
6.	Iram	3	2.85
7.	Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	3	2.85
8.	al-Khiḍr	3	2.85
9.	Nūḥ (Noah)	2	1.90
10.	Qārūn	2	1.90
11.	Dāwūd (David)	2	1.90
12.	Yūsuf (Joseph)	1	0.95
13.	Hārūt	1	0.95
14.	al-Janna wa mā taḥwīh	16	15.21
15.	Asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā	6	5.71
16.	al-Ḥasad	5	4.76
17.	al-Qur'ān wa l-Furqān	4	3.80
18.	Lā yumkin al-mafarr min qaḍā' Allāh	3	2.85
19.	al-Ḥadīd	2	1.90
20.	Lā yakhfā ^C ala Allāh shay'	2	1.90
21.	al-Lawḥ al-maḥfūz	2	1.90

22.	Ḥusn ma'āb	2	1.90
23.	Mithqāl	2	1.90
24.	ūlu 'l-albāb	2	1.90
25.	Aṭī ^C ū Allāh wa 'aṭī ^C ū al-Rasūl wa 'uli al-'amri minḵum	1	0.95
26.	Wa ja ^C alnā min al-mā'i kulla shay'in ḥayy	1	0.95
27.	Sundus akḥḍar	1	0.95
28.	Naṣr Allāh	2	1.90
29.	Aṣābi ^C 'Azrā'īl	1	0.95
30.	Allāh yujzī al-muḥsinīn	1	0.95
31.	Inna Allāh 'ishtara min al-mu'minīn 'anfusahum wa 'amwālahum bi'anna lahum al-Janna	1	0.95
32.	Kadhiba al-munajjimūna walaw ṣadafū	1	0.95
33.	Zilzāl al-ard		
Total:			<u>105</u>

2) Farrukhī

Subject	No.of Repet- ition	Per- centage
1. Ya'jūj wa Ma'jūj wa sadd al-'Iskandar	17	9.43
2. Mūsā (Moses)	12	6.66
3. 'Īsā (Jesus)	9	5.0
4. 'Āam	7	3.88
5. 'Iram	6	3.33
6. Sulaymān (Solomon)	5	2.77
7. Qārūn	4	2.22
8. Nūḥ (Noah)	2	1.11
9. Dāwūd (David)	2	1.11
10. al-Khiḍr	2	1.11
11. 'Iblīs (Satan)	2	1.11
12. 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	2	1.11
13. al-Janna wa mā taḥwīh	22	12.21
14. al-Qur'ān wa al-furqān	11	6.11
15. al-Ḥasad wa 'Cayn al-sū'	10	5.55
16. 'Asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā	9	4.99
17. Man jā'a bil-ḥasanati falahu 'Cashrat amthālihā	4	2.22
18. Ḥabl matīn	3	1.66
19. Shihāb	3	1.66
20. 'Istijābat Allāh lil-du'Cā'	3	1.66
21. 'Cilm Allāh bi al-sirr	3	1.66
22. Naṣr Allāh	3	1.66
23. al-Ṣalāh	3	1.66

24.	al-'Abtar	2	1.11
25.	Ḥusn ma'āb	2	1.11
26.	Fasubḥān Allāh Ḥammā yaṣifūn	2	1.11
27.	Thumma yunbi'hum bimā Ḥamilū yawma al-Qiṣāmah	2	1.11
28.	Mathalu 'alladhīna yunfiqūna amwālahum fisabīli Allāh kamathali ḥabbatin anbatat sabḤa sanābil	2	1.11
29.	Iqtarabat al-sāḤa	1	0.55
30.	al-Mann	1	0.55
31.	Qul 'aḤūdh	1	0.55
32.	Inna rabbakum huwa alladhī khalaqa al-samawāt wa l-'arḍ fisattat 'ayyam	1	0.55
33.	'Ulu 'l-albāb	1	0.55
34.	Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ	1	0.55
35.	Sūrat yāsīn	1	0.55
36.	Alam tara ilā lladhīna baddalū niḤmata Allāh kufran wa'aḥallū qawmahum dāra al-bawār	1	0.55
37.	al-Waḥy	1	0.55
38.	al-Fātiḥa	1	0.55
39.	Qul bifadl Allāh wa birahmatihi fabidhālik falyafrahū	1	0.55
40.	Qul in tukhfū mā fī sudūrikum aw tubdūh yaḤlamuhu Allāh	1	0.55
41.	Man yaḤmal mithqāla dharratin khayran yara waman yaḤmal mithqāla dharratin sharran yara	1	0.55
42.	Inna Allāh lā yazlimu mithqāla dharratin wa 'in taku ḥasanatan yudāḤifhā	1 1	0.55 0.55
43.	YaḤiduhum wayumannīhum wamā yaḤiduhumu al-shayṭānu 'illā ghurūra	1	0.55

44.	Lā 'ilāha 'illā Allāh	1	0.55
45.	Yawma tabyaḍ wujūh wa taswadd wujūh	1	0.55
46.	al-Bāṭin ghayr al-zāhir	1	0.55
47.	al-Nadam	1	0.55
Total:		<u>179</u>	

3) Manūchehrī

	Subject	No.of Repet- ition	Per- centage
1.	ʿIsā (Jesus)	21	8.48
2.	Mūsā (Moses)	14	5.22
3.	Sulaymān (Solomon)	11	4.41
4.	Muḥammad	7	2.81
5.	'Iram	5	2.0
6.	Yaʿqūb (Jacob) and Yūsuf (Joseph)	5	2.0
7.	Dāwūd (David)	2	0.8
8.	Qārūn	2	0.8
9.	'Ādhar and 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	2	0.8
10.	'Ayyūb (Job)	1	0.4
11.	Yūnus (Jonah)	1	0.4
12.	Nūḥ (Noah)	1	0.4
13.	'Ishāq (Isaac)	1	0.4
14.	al-Janna wa mā taḥwīh	45	18.7
15.	Asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā	19	7.63
16.	Qul allāhumma mālik al-mulk	8	3.21
17.	al-Shayṭān (Satan) wa 'l-ʿiṣyān	7	2.81
18.	al-Nār wa 'asmā'uhā	7	2.81
19.	al-Ṣalāh (prayer) wa 'l-'adhān	5	2.0
20.	ṭūbā	4	1.6
21.	Bism Allāh	3	1.2
22.	Mā' Maʿīn	3	1.2
23.	Jibrīl wa Rūḥ al-Qudus	3	1.2

24.	Sab ^C Samāwāt	3	1.2
25.	al-Kāẓimīn al-Ghayẓ	3	1.2
26.	al-Furqān wa al-Qur'ān	3	1.2
27.	Ta'yīd Allāh	3	1.2
28.	Subhān Alladhī 'asrā wa l-mi ^C rāj	3	1.2
29.	Allāh lā yuḥibb al-ẓulm	2	0.8
30.	Ṣarṣar	2	0.8
31.	Mālik al- ^C arsh	2	0.8
32.	Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata	2	0.8
33.	^C Azrā'īl wa malak al-mawt	2	0.8
34.	al-minnah lillāh	2	0.8
35.	al-Fātiḥah	2	0.8
36.	al-Shukr	2	0.8
37.	Khuld	2	0.8
38.	Jarād muntashir	1	0.4
39.	wa mā ya ^C lam ta'wīlahu 'illa l-lāh	1	0.4
40.	al-yusr wa l- ^C usr	1	0.4
41.	al-Ḥasad	1	0.4
42.	Kun fayakūn	1	0.4
43.	Aṣamm	1	0.4
44.	^C Afw Allāh	1	0.4
45.	Laylat al-Qadr	1	0.4
46.	Inna shāni'aka huwa l-'abtar	1	0.4
47.	^C Aynu l-yaqīn	1	0.4
48.	Ḥabl matīn	1	0.4

49.	al- ^C urwat ul-wuthqā	1	0.4
50.	Dār ul-qarār	1	0.4
51.	Wa mā kunna ^C ani l-khalqi ghāfilīn	1	0.4
52.	Ḥaqqu l-yaqīn	1	0.4
53.	Yu ^C ṭī man yashā' wa yamna ^C man yashā'	1	0.4
54.	al-Ḥadīd	1	0.4
55.	al-Ṣirāṭ	1	0.4
56.	Kaṭayī al-sijil	1	0.4
57.	Wird mawrūd	1	0.4
58.	al Safā wa l-marwa	1	0.4
59.	Shihāb	1	0.4
60.	Nujziya l-muḥsinīn	1	0.4
61.	Mā' zamzam	1	0.4
62.	^C īdu al-Aḍḥā	1	0.4
63.	Ayat al-kursiyy	1	0.4
64.	al-Ribā	1	0.4
65.	al-Ṭalaq	1	0.4
66.	Subhān Allāh	1	0.4
67.	Inna kaydahunna ^C azīm	1	0.4
68.	Qul huwa Allāh 'aḥad	1	0.4
69.	Ramaḍān	1	0.4
70.	al- ^C īd wa al-ṣawm	1	0.4
71.	Kāfir	1	0.4
72.	al-Ḥarām wa al-ḥalāl	1	0.4
73.	al-Fasād fi al-'ard	1	0.4

74.	Allāh 'akbar	1	0.4
75.	Yawm al-ḥashr	1	0.4
76.	In shā' Allāh	1	0.4
Total:		<u>249</u>	

4) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī

Subject	No. of Repet- ition	Per- centage
1. 'Ādam wa Ḥawwā'	14	5.03
2. Sulaymān (Solomon)	8	2.87
3. 'Īsā (Jesus)	8	2.87
4. Nūḥ (Noah) wal-ṭūfān	7	2.51
5. Muḥammad wal-mi ^c rāj	7	2.51
6. Mūsā (Moses)	6	2.15
7. 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	5	1.79
8. al-'Iskandar wa Ya'jūj wa Ma'jūj	5	1.79
9. Yūsuf (Joseph)	3	1.07
10. 'Iram	3	1.07
11. Yūnus (Jonah)	2	0.71
12. al-Khiḍr	2	0.71
13. Qārūn	2	0.71
14. Dāwūd	2	0.71
15. Luqmān	2	0.71
16. al-Shayṭān wash-shihāb	25	8.99
17. Jibrīl wa al-rūḥ al-'Āmīn wa Mīkāīl	5	1.79
18. al-Jannah wa mā taḥwīh	16	5.75
19. Asmā Allāhi al-ḥusnā	15	5.39
20. al-Ḥasad	12	4.31
21. al-Qaḍā' wal-qadar	12	4.31
22. al-Islām wal-muslimūn	11	3.95

23.	Yā rabb	9	3.23
24.	Takbīr	8	2.87
25.	Ṣarṣar	7	2.51
26.	an-Nafkh fi al-sūr wa ḥāl al-nās yawma al-ḥaṣhr	6	2.15
27.	Lawḥ maṣṭūr maḥfūz	6	2.15
28.	al- ^Ḥ Iqāb	5	1.79
29.	Mubīn	3	1.07
30.	al-Ta ^Ḥ cawwudh billāh	3	1.07
31.	Allāh ḍāmin al-rizq	3	1.07
32.	Ta'yīd Allāh	3	1.07
33.	Dāru l-qarār	3	1.07
34.	al-Thawāb	3	1.07
35.	Kull man ^Ḥ alaihā fāni	2	0.71
36.	Huwa lladhi ja ^Ḥ ala al-shamsa ḍiyā'an wal-qamara nūran	2	0.71
37.	Tabārak	2	0.71
38.	Yā-sīn	2	0.71
39.	^Ḥ Iḍu l-aḍḥā	2	0.71
40.	al-Rīḥ l- ^Ḥ aqīm	2	0.71
41.	^Ḥ Illiyīn	2	0.71
42.	Ṣirāṭ	2	0.71
43.	Allāhu 'akbar	2	0.71
44.	Ma'āb	2	0.71
45.	Ashhadu 'an lā 'ilāha 'illa Allāh	2	0.71
46.	Ṣalṣāl	2	0.71

47.	ʿAdhāb 'alīm	1	0.35
48.	Waḥdāniyyat Allāh	1	0.35
49.	al-ʿIlm bil-ghaib	1	0.35
50.	Ḥamda lillāh	1	0.35
51.	al-Raḥmatu 'ayatu Allāh	1	0.35
52.	Inna al-mulūka 'idha dakhalū qariyatan afsadūha	1	0.35
53.	Basta	1	0.35
54.	Ijtināb qawl al-zūr	1	0.35
55.	Alam yajidaka yatīman fa'awā	1	0.35
56.	al-ʿAfw	1	0.35
57.	Watara al-jibāla taḥsabhā jāmida	1	0.35
58.	Wa-lladhīna kafarū 'a ^{cm} ālulum kasarābin biqay ^{cah}	1	0.35
59.	Khardal	1	0.35
60.	al-Sha ^{Crā}	1	0.35
61.	Kirāman kātibīn	1	0.35
62.	Wa al-saqf al-marfū ^C	1	0.35
63.	Allāh 'llahdhī rafa ^{Ca} al-samawāti bighairi ^C amadin	1	0.35
64.	Ḥadīthatu l-fīl	1	0.35
65.	Māliku al-nās	1	0.35
66.	Ghalabat al-rūm	1	0.35
67.	Fatazawwadū fa'inna khaira al-zādi al-taqwā	1	0.35
68.	Inna Allāh ya'mur bil- ^C adl	1	0.35

69.	Hal tastawī huwa wa man ya'mur bil- ^C adl	1	0.35
70.	Nūrun ^C alā nūr	1	0.35
Total:		<u>278</u>	

5) Anvarī

	Subject	No.of Repet- ition	Per- centage
1.	Mūsā (Moses)	53	8.5
2.	Sulaymān (Solomon)	49	7.44
3.	ʿĪsā (Jesus)	36	5.47
4.	al-Shayṭān wal-shihāb	33	5.01
5.	al-Iskandar (Dhu-l-Qarnayn) wa Ya'jūj wa Ma'jūj	22	3.34
6.	Yūsuf (Joseph)	20	3.03
7.	Muḥammad	18	2.73
8.	Jibrīl wal-wahy	17	2.58
9.	Qārūn	12	1.82
10.	Ādam	10	1.51
11.	Yūnus	7	1.06
12.	Ibrāhīm (Abraham)	5	0.75
13.	Luqmān	5	0.75
14.	Iram	4	0.60
15.	Ṣāhib al-Janna	4	0.60
16.	Zakariyya	1	0.15
17.	Yahyā	1	0.15
18.	Ilyās	1	0.15
19.	al-Janna wa mā taḥwīh	56	8.51
20.	al-Ḥashr wan-nafkh fī 'al-sūr waḥāl al-nās fī yawmih	51	7.75
21.	Asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā	38	5.77

22.	Lā ilāha 'illā Allāh	15	2.27
23.	Nār Jahannam wa'asmā'uhā	13	1.97
24.	al-Lawḥ l-maḥfūz	10	1.51
25.	al-Rīḥ al-ṣarṣar	10	1.51
26.	al-Qur'ān	9	1.36
27.	al-Ḥasad	8	1.21
28.	Ṣummun bukmun ^C umyun	8	1.21
29.	Mubīn	7	1.06
30.	Tabāarak Allāh	6	0.91
31.	^C Illīyyīn	5	0.75
32.	Malaki l-mawt wa ^C Azrā'īl	4	0.64
33.	Huwa lladhī yusawwirukum fil- 'arhāmi kayfā yashā' thumma jā ^C alnāhu nutfatan fi qarārin makīn	5	0.75
34.	Taḥyatu l-islām	4	0.64
35.	al-Ḥamd lillāh	4	0.64
36.	Māliku al-nās	4	0.64
37.	al- ^C Itiṣām biḥabl Allāh	4	0.64
38.	Allāhu lā 'ilāha illā huwa l-hayyu l-qayyām lā ta'kudhhu sinatun walā nawm	3	0.45
39.	Wujūb al-ta'awwudh bi Allāh	3	0.45
40.	Istijābatu Allāh li al-du ^C ā'	3	0.45
41.	Ḥusn ma'āb	3	0.45
42.	Sha ^C ā'ir al-ḥajj	3	0.45
43.	^C Īdu l-'aḍhā	3	0.45

44.	Idhā jā'a naṣru Allāh wal-fath	2	0.30
45.	al-Mann was-salwā	2	0.30
46.	ʿAdhābun ʿalīm	2	0.30
47.	Man yuhil-ʿizāma wahya ramīm	2	0.30
48.	Allātu wa al-ʿUzza	2	0.30
49.	Wa kitāb mastūr	2	0.30
50.	In lam yazal wa subhān	2	0.30
51.	Allāhu akbar	2	0.30
52.	Lā yus'al ʿammā yafʿalūna wahum yus'alūn	2	0.30
53.	Hādithat al-fīl	1	0.15
54.	Falā 'uqsim bi al-shafaq	1	0.15
55.	Ṣifāt al-zawjāt al-muslimāt	1	0.15
56.	Anzirūna naqtabis min nūrikum	1	0.15
57.	Ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb	1	0.15
58.	Jarādun muntashir	1	0.15
59.	ʿAlā 'amrin qad qudir	1	0.15
60.	'Ummu al-kitāb	1	0.15
61.	ʿAllama al-'insāna mā lam yaʿlam	1	0.15
62.	Wa al-tīni wa al-zaytūn waṭūri sīnīn	1	0.15
63.	Nūrun ʿalā nūr	1	0.15
64.	Wala'in shakartum la'azīdannakum	1	0.15
65.	Mā 'arsalnāka 'ilā mubashshiran wa nadhiran	1	0.15
66.	Tabbat yada 'Abī Lahab watab	1	0.15

67.	Inna Allāha ^C alā kulli shay'in shahīdun	1	0.15
68.	Dhalika faḍl Allāhi yu'tīhi man yashā'	1	0.15
69.	al-Rushd mina al-ghayy	1	0.15
70.	Yawma natwī al-samā'a kaṭayi al- sijilī li al-kutub	1	0.15
71.	Wa law shi'nā	1	0.15
72.	Wakafa Allāh al-mu'minīna al-qitāl	1	0.15
73.	Fāliq al-'iṣbāh	1	0.15
74.	Allāh yubsiṭ al-rizq liman yashā' wayaqdir	1	0.15
75.	al-An ^C ām	1	0.15
76.	Yā-Sīn	1	0.15
77.	Bil- ^C ashiyy wal-ibkār	1	0.15
78.	Fastaqim	1	0.15
79.	Alladhī <u>kh</u> alāqa sab ^C samawātīn ṭibāqan	1	0.15
80.	Wal-baḥri l-masjūr	1	0.15
81.	Yuḥyi l-lāhu l-mawta	1	0.15
82.	Wakhasha ^C at ul-aswāt lir-raḥmān falā tasma ^C illā hamsan	1	0.15
83.	Huwa lladhī khalaqakum min ṭīn	1	0.15
84.	Man kāna ^C adu Allāha wa malā'ikatih	1	0.15
85.	Quḍya al-amr	1	0.15
86.	al- ^C Urwati l-wathqā	1	0.15
87.	Atī ^C u' Allāh . . . wa 'ullil amri minkum	1	0.15

88.	Ulu al-albāb	1	0.15
89.	Ramaḍān	1	0.15
Total:		<u>658</u>	

A R A B P O E T S

1) Abū Nuwās

Subject	No. of Repet- ition
i) <u>Direct reference:</u>	
- al-janna wa muḥṭawāhā	15
- dhikr asmā' suwar al-Qur'ān (Tāhā, al-tūr, sād, qāf, al-dhāriyāt, al-Ḥaṣhr, al-Mūrsalāt, Ḥūd, yāsīn, al-Nūr, al-Nazilāt)	11
- asmā' Allāh (dhu 'l-tawl dhu 'l-kibriyā' wa 'l-minan, al-Rāḥīm, al-Ghafūr, al-Wāḥid, al-Qaḥḥār)	10
- al-Qasam bi Allāh wa'āyatih (birabb yāsīn, wa Tāhā, wa 'l-dhikr al-ḥakīm)	6
- Solomon and Bilqīs	6
- Moses	5
- Noah	3
- David	3
- Muḥammad	3
- Yūnus	2
- Yūsuf	2
- Jesus	2
- Qārūn	1
- Dhu al-Qarnayn	1
- Abraham	1
- dhikr ḥurūf al-Qur'ān (alif, lām, rā')	1
- 'ara'ayt alladhī yukadhdhib bi 'l-dīn	1

ii) Indirect reference:

- Iblīs wa 'l-rajm wa 'l-shihāb	6
- al-ḥisāb wa jahannam wa al-ḥashr	6
- khalq al-insān	5
- inna Allāh yaghfir al-dhunūb jamī ^{Ca}	5
- yanṣur man yashā'	3
- lā yakhfā ^{Ca} alā Allāh shay'	3
- ittaqā Allāh ḥaqq tuqātih	3
- kull nafs dhā'iqat al-mawt	2
- kull man ^{Ca} alayhā fānī	2
- Allāh ^{Ca} alim al-ghayb	2
- ^{Ca} abūs qanṭarir	1
- wasīqa al-ladhīn ittaqaw rabbahum ilā al-janna zumara	1
- wa mā tashā'ūn illā an yashā' Allāh	1
- yafirrūn ilā Allā	1
- bidhikr Allā iqsha ^{Ca} arrat qulūbukum	1
- in tu ^{Ca} adhdhibhum fahum ^{Ca} ibāduk wa in taghfir lahum fahum ^{Ca} ibāduk	1
- wa in tu ^{Ca} idd ni ^{Ca} mat Allāh lā tuḥṣūhā	1
- innak lamayyit wa innahum lamayyitūn	1
- wa yabqā wajh rabbik	1
- al-ḥalāl bayyin wa 'l-ḥarām bayyin	1
- yumhil walā yuhmil	1
- mā khuliqat al-jinn wa 'l-ins illā liya ^{Ca} budū	1
- al-'amr bi al-ma ^{Ca} rūf	1

- wa khalaqnā min al-mā' kull shay' ḥayy	1
- lakum dīnukum wa lī dīn	1
- mārij min nār	1
- thamūd	1

iii) Common usage

- al-ṣalāh	15
- al-ḥamd lillāh	12
- ʿafw Allāh	8
- subḥān Allāh	4
- astaghfir Allāh	4
- al-siyām	4
- raḥmat Allāh	3
- al-ḥajj	3
- khashyat Allāh	3
- tabāarak Allāh	3
- al-salām ʿalaykum, ʿalaykum al-salām	3
- al-istiʿāna bi Allāh	3
- maʿādh Allāh	2
- ḥasbī Allāh	2
- ḥasbī Allāh wa niʿma al-wakīl	1

Total: 198

2) al-Buhturī

Subject	No.of Repet- ition
i) <u>Direct reference:</u>	
- Muḥammad	10
- Solomon and Bilqīs	3
- al-Janna wa muḥtawāha	2
- Allāh yarzuq man yashā' wa yaqdir	1
- Allāh yu ^c ṭī man yashā' wa yaqdir	1
- Faṣl al-khitāb	1
ii) <u>Indirect reference</u>	
- al-ṣawm wa al-fiṭr	8
- yu ^c ṭī Allāh baṣṭan wa qabḍā	1
- wa ja ^c alna ba ^c ḍakum fawqa ba ^c ḍ darajat	1
- inna akramakum ^c inda Allāh atqākum	
iii) <u>Common usage</u>	
- 'amīn Allāh	5
- al-Islām	5
- dīn Allāh	4
- ta'yīd Allāh	3
- al-qasam bi Allāh	3
- dīn Muḥammad	3

- al-ḥamd lillāh	3
- ḥāshā li Allāh	2
- kān sa ^c yakum mashkuran	1

Total:	<u>58</u>
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3) Abū Tammām

Subject	No. of Repet- ition
i) <u>Direct reference</u>	
- al-janna wa muḥṭawāhā	17
- asmā' Allāh (dhu 'l-Jalāl, dhu 'l- ^C Arsh, Ra'ūf, Raḥmān, al-Wāḥid)	9
- al-Qur'ān	6
- shayṭān rajīm	6
- Ramaḍān wa al-ṣawm	4
- dhikr asmā' ba ^C d suwar al-Qur'ān (al-'anfāl, al-'an ^C ām)	3
- qārūn	2
- al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm	2
- shihāb thāqib	2
- mathal nūrih kamishkātin	1
- min warā' ḥijāb	1
- ka ṭayy al-sijill	1
- al-mu'lafat al-qulūb	1
- kafā Allāh al-mu'minīn al-qitāl	1
- kun fayakūn	1
- al-baḥr al-masjur	1
- rabb al- ^C Alamīn	1
- salaqukum bi alsina ḥidād	1
- khuliqa al-insān min ^C ajal	1

ii) Indirect reference

- Moses	7
- dhu al-Nūn	4
- Joseph	3
- Jacob	3
- Muḥammad	3
- al-ṣalah	3
- Solomon	2
- Jesus	2
- al-ḥashr	2
- wa Allāh ^C alā mā 'aḡūk shahīd	1
- ashhad 'anna lā ilāh illa Allāh	1
- inna al-dīn ^C inda Allāh al-Islām	1
- ka'annahum 'a ^C jāz nakblim munqair	1
- taṭṭali ^C ^C alā al-'af'ida	1
- al-ṭalāq	1
- innahu kāna ^C ahdan shakuran	1
- inna al-insāna la yaṭṭa	1
- al-lawḥ	1
- 'Iram	1
- al-zaqqum	1
- wa 'a ^C tī dha al-qurbā haqqah wa al-miskīn wa ibn al-sabīl wa la tubadhdhir tabdhīrā	1
- lu'lu' maknūn	1
- luqmān	1

- wa i ^C lamū 'anna mā ghanimtum min shayy' fa inna li Allāh khumsuh	1
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iii) Common usage

- al-qasam bi Allāh	8
- al-ḥamd lillāh	7
- al-islām	6
- al-ḥasad	6
- salām Allāh	4
- ta ^C āla Allāh	3
- ra ^C āk Allāh	2
- bukratan wa 'aṣīla	1
- jazā Allāh	1
- jazā Allā sa ^C yak	1

Total:	<u>143</u>
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4) al-Mutanabbī

Subject	No.of Repet- ition
i) <u>Direct reference:</u>	
- asmā' Allāh	7
- al-Qur'ān	4
- yu ^c ṭī man yashā' wa yamna ^c	1
- ḥabl al-warīd	1
ii) <u>Indirect reference</u>	
- Jesus	5
- Solomon	3
- Moses	2
- Dhu al-Qarnayn	2
- Joseph	2
- Thamūd wa ṣāliḥ	2
- al-ṣawm	2
- ʿālim al-ghayb	2
- al-janna wa muḥtawāha	2
- wa'alanna lahu al-ḥadīd	2
- kull nafsin dhā'iqat al-mawt	2
- shakḥ al-'abṣār	1
- Allāh yaghfir al-dhunūb	2
- kharru likhālīqhim sujjada	1

- Noah	1	1
- Dhu al-Qarnayn		1
- Adam		1

ii) Indirect reference

- Inna al-maniyyata law jā'a fa innahum lā yastaqdimūn sa ^C wa lā yasta'khirūn	1
- Allāh mālīk al-'anfus	1
- al-khushu ^C wa al-sujūd li Allāh	1
- al-ṣalāh wa al-sujūd	1
- inna Allāh lā yuḍī ^C u 'ajr man aḥsan ^C amalan	1
- Allāh yarzuq man yashā' wa yamna ^C	1
- inna Allāh wa malā'ikatah yuṣallūna ^C ala al-Nabī	1
- yalqa al-muslim rabbah fariḥan	1

iii) Common usage

- al-qasam bi Allāh	2
- jazā' Allāh	2
- astaghfir Allāh	2
- al-ḥamd lillāh	1
- ḥasbuk Allāh	1
- tabarak Allāh	1

Total:	<u>62</u>
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GENERAL COMPARATIVE TABLE

	Line Total	No. of Qur'ānic References	% of total
^c Unṣurī	3287	105	3%
Farrukhī	8832	180	2%
Manūchehrī	2777	249	9%
Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī	2280	278	12%
Anvarī	7326 ⁽¹⁾	658	9%
Abū Nuwās	4994	198	4%
al-Buḥturī	5982 ⁽²⁾	58	1%
Abū Tammām	7174	143	2%
al-Mutanabbī	3660	62	1.6%

(1) As pointed out above, this number refers not to his whole dīwān but only to gasīdas.

(2) As pointed out above, only one volume has been taken into consideration.

The general tables listed above lump together many features of the poetry in statistical form, a discussion of which affords us the opportunity to put a little flesh on the figures at this early stage whilst serving, at the same time, to introduce central themes of the poetry itself, the context in which they are expressed, and the methods by which this expression is realized.

It will be immediately observed that the total number of Qur'anic references in the dīwāns of the Persian poets overwhelmingly outweighs that provided by the Arabs, the latter yielding an average of 1.7% of their total line output, the Persians 7.4%. But the Persians also exhibit considerable internal variation (from 13% in Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī down to a mere 2% in Farrukhī) so that one should be wary of too sweeping generalizations.

Nevertheless, all the five Persian poets clearly share common characteristics in their approach to the use of Qur'anic material in the poetry, showing a predilection for those Qur'anic narratives which invoke prophet figures and associated objects and places, with each poet devoting an average 37% of his total Qur'anic material to this subject, followed by the utilization of Paradisaical material, both employed in the main within the genre of madīḥ (Eulogy) and then, to a lesser extent, in ṭabīʿa (Description of Nature), ghazal (Love poetry), fakhr (Praise/Self-praise),

du^c-ā' (Invocation) and rīthā' (Lamentation). The relationship between the subject material and the object to be praised, described or adored is overwhelmingly articulated through the device of simile.

Farrukhī, for example, eulogises a patron who led his army through the (shallow) sea, likening him to Mūsā (Moses) and his miraculous escape from the Pharaohs.⁽⁵⁾ This prophetic figure is similarly cited by Farrukhī on some twelve other occasions as a term of comparison for the patron (6.6% of his coverage of Qur'anic material). ^cUnsuri, for his part, refers to Solomon on no less than eight occasions (2%) and Noah seven (2%).

Anvarī's treatment of these Qur'anic narratives roughly corresponds to that of Farrukhī and ^cUnsurī, while their incidence is even higher. Mūsā, for example, is referred to by Anvarī on no less than fifty three occasions (8.5%). Indeed, of the 7326 verses that constitute his dīwān, 700 (or 10% approximately) include reference to Qur'anic material. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī shows an even higher concentration of Qur'anic usage, but it is Anvarī who employs the broadest range of poetical genres amongst his Persian colleagues, including madīh, hijā' (Satire), ghazal, rīthā', fakhr, du^c-ā' and ṭabī^ca, making for a greater diversification of poetic style, to which may also be related the superior technical skills displayed throughout his poetry.

Manūchehrī, for his part, cites the figure of Moses on 14 occasions (5.2%), Isa no less than 21 times (8.5%) and Solomon 11 (4.4%). All the Persian poets, through these references, seek to associate their respective patron's actions with the prophets' divine miracles, for the purpose of establishing parity with or, in some cases, placing their patrons above, these figures.

We note also that ^cUnşurī's extensive use of du^cā, using figures like Majūj and Yajūj (8 occasions - 7%) in order to make supplications to God on behalf of his patron, finds an echo in the earlier efforts made in this genre by the Arab poets Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī, who use the figures of Mūsā, Solomon and Bilqīs respectively to achieve a similar objective.

Within a significantly smaller total of references, the Arab poets devoted an equal proportion of attention to the use of prophetic material in the Qur'ān, again utilized in the main for purposes of eulogy. But their task, principally, was to strengthen and boost the secular power of the Caliph or patron by conferring on him a divine sanction brought about through his association with the prophetic figures mentioned in the Qur'ān, as if to justify rather than, as with the Persians, acknowledge the standing of their patrons. Indeed, the latter, it could be argued, viewed their kings rather as the embodiment of a cultural

ideal. Their ministers, who were depicted as occupying the next important rung down in the rigid, hierarchical system, deserved comparable if less hyperbolic and oleaginous treatment than their masters so that Prophetic reference was also customary in relation to them.

With the Arab poets, the attitude towards the patron is subtly different. Whether or not it would be justifiable to relate this to differences in social structure or political ideology, it may at least be noted that the level of hyperbole is lower, in other words, that the degree of self-abasement in relation to the patron is less. It may well be that such a general distinction might not be visible from the kind of quantification offered here, but it could at least be argued that the low level of allusion among the Arab poets to the Prophetic figures so clearly used by the Persians to place the patron on a semi-divine pedestal ties in with such a difference in attitude. It is such distinctions that matter more when comparing the Arab dīwān with the Persians than the obvious disparity in the sheer number of Qur'anic references used by each group. Al-Mutannabī, for example, devotes only 3 verses to the figure of Dhū-l-Qarnayn and 2 to Mūsā (although it must be conceded that when set against the minute size of that part of his dīwān given over to the treatment of Qur'anic material, this is still, by no means, an insignificant proportion). But elevation of the patron to a status above that of a prophetic figure is certainly not absent. Thus,

Abū Nuwās shows no compunction in his eulogy, particularly of Hārūn al-Rashīd, in placing his patron above the figures of Moses and Solomon to whom he refers on a number of occasions. Abū al-^CAtāhiya composed little if any eulogy and is to be considered, as noted above, an exception at this stage.

What obtains in the poets' usage of prophetic material largely applies also to their exploitation of the paradisaical figures, places and objects which appear at frequent intervals throughout the Qur'ān.

Manūchehrī's treatment of this subject is as diverse as it is considerable. He cites words related to Paradise such as houris, gardens and rivers on no less than 45 occasions, constituting 18% of the total Qur'anic references present in his dīwān. The context in which these normally appear is ṭabī^Ca (description of Nature): he may relate a description of wine to Paradise, or portray, say, the beauty of spring in the image of the garden of Eden. Even where Manūchehrī is called on to praise his patron, this descriptive aspect of his poetry refuses to recede into the background, as evidenced, for example, by his comparison of a patron's palace with al-Kawthar, a river in Paradise renowned for its abundant waters, in order to emphasize the patron's generosity.⁽⁶⁾

^CUnṣurī's contribution to this particular aspect of Qur'anic reference is also significant, amounting to 15% of his total; like Manūchehrī, he also uses the al-Kawthar image for the same purpose⁽⁷⁾ but, on the whole, prefers to marry paradisaical imagery with eulogy, using ṭabī^Ca as a means to an end rather than, like Manūchehrī, indulging in description of Nature for its own sake. Farrukhī also chooses similar images and adopts likeminded methods to praise his patron, as in his comparison of orchards, which decorate the palace gardens, to Paradise (firdaws) full with ḥūr-al-^Cīn (Houris with large eyes).⁽⁸⁾ The incidence of Paradise imagery in his dīwān is, at 12%, not much lower than with ^CUnṣurī. Both make significantly less use of this material but in their treatment of it are akin to Anvari. The ^CAbbasid poets (Abū al-^CAtāhiya again excepted) devote a comparable proportion of attention (in relation to their total coverage) to the exploitation of paradisaical material. al-Mutanabbī, for example, refers to the term al-janna:

يُبْكِي عَلَيْهِ وَمَا اسْتَقَرَّ قَرَارُهُ فِي اللَّحْدِ حَتَّى صَافَحَتْهُ الْحُورُ⁽⁹⁾

'They wept over him (lit. he was wept over/mourned for).
Hardly had he settled down in the grave
than he was greeted by the ḥūr.'

as does Abū Tammām on no less than 14 occasions, a typical example being:

قَالَ وَعَيْنِي مِنْهُ فِي عَيْنِهِ
رَاتِعَةً فِي جَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ (10)

'He said on account of him my eyes when
they gaze into his, are as if grazing on
the meadow of paradise.'

with al-Buḥturī invoking the term jannat-al-firdaws once, in a direct fashion, in order to strengthen his patron's secular position by effectively conferring on him a divine attribute. However, considering that his total number of Qur'anic references amounts to no more than 14 (or 0.25%) of his entire dīwān, which contains 5982 verses, this single instance does not represent an unexpectedly low proportion. The above examples, and the contribution of Abū Nuwās based on his utilization of paradisaical material - particularly his frequent manipulation of the hūr image to serve and embellish his homosexual love poetry - illustrate the essential differences that obtain between the Persian and the Arab poet with respect to the methods used to express the Qur'anic material, and the motives for doing so.

For the Persians, paradisaical material functions as a source serving both a practical and a decorative or purely aesthetic purpose. The invocation of an image like al-Kawthar calls to the fertile mind of Manūchehrī, for example, a wealth of detail present in the many wondrous

features of Nature; alternatively, the description of Paradise may, through a skilfully executed comparison, bring to the attention of the audience the multi-faceted nature of wine-making. For the ^CAbbasid poets, not excepting Abū Nuwās, the most Persian-minded of them in his poetic style, his cultural leanings and his aesthetic sensibilities, the utilization of Qur'anic material had primarily a functional purpose.

Distinctions between the two groups of poets may also be observed in the miscellaneous area which concerns standard phrases and general vocabulary such as lā yalid wa lā yūlad; kull man ʿalayhā fanī astaghfir Allāh and al-hamd lillāh, to cite but a few. However, given the different nature and function of such material, these distinctions are of a rather different order, the Arab poets tending to alter the Qur'anic formulation by, say, substituting a synonym for a key word in the phrase, while the Persians prefer to include the whole phrase unchanged, its special status as a quote being reinforced, of course, by the language switch from Persian to Arabic.

The number of such phrases is extremely large, the incidence of each one correspondingly low, so that it is virtually impossible to discern any particular trend or predilection. At most, one must mention, but only as statistically significant, the fifteen occurrences in Anvarī's dīwān of the phrase la ilaha illa Allāh.

As noted above, Arab poets, especially Abū Nuwās and al-Mutanabbī, tend to alter or paraphrase certain terms before inserting them into their verses - in the case of the former, often inverting the original meaning in an impious fashion. Abū al-^CAtāhiya, of course, goes to the opposite extreme and it is in this section that he comes into his own, devoting 60% of his treatment of Qur'anic material to the exploitation of general vocabulary, thus endorsing his general profile as the reverse of what we find amongst the Persian poets and, to a lesser extent, amongst his Arab compatriots. What for them are the most fruitful fields for metaphorical extrapolation, the prophetic and paradisaical materials, are virtually neglected by Abū al-^CAtāhiya in favour of phrases suitable for direct address in homiletic contexts.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

- (1) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Insan LXXVI, 30.
- (2) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, (ed. Bahjat ^CAbd al-Ghafūr al-Hadithī), Baghdad, 1980, p.75.
- (3) Qur'ān, Sūrat Taha XX, 44.
- (4) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.619.
- (5) Farrukhī, Dīwān, (ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī), Tehran, 1347 H.sh., p.217.
- (6) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, (ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī), Tehran, 1347 H.sh., p.217.
- (7) ^CUnṣurī, Dīwān (ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī), Tehran, 1342 H.sh., p.9.
- (8) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.429.
- (9) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, (Nukhba min al-Udabā'), Beirut, n.d., p.138.
- (10) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, (ed. Muḥammad ^CAbdun ^CAzzam), Vol.IV, Egypt, 1965, p.186.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TREATMENT OF PARADISE MATERIAL IN THE QUR'ĀN

General Introduction

We have already seen from the statistical table of the Persian and Arab poets' use of Qur'anic material in general that the Persian poets tend to make greater use of such material than the Arabs. This point is again demonstrated in the following, more specific table which shows the Persian and Arab poets' usage of Qur'anic material relating to Paradise.

In the statistical table, Paradise terms are listed for each poet in descending order of frequency, according to the Persian poets' usage, and the Persian poets are listed chronologically from left to right. The columns marked "A" in the table show for each poet the number of references to a given term. The columns marked "B" give an adjusted figure to show its relative incidence in relation to the size of the sample (number of verses) as shown at the head of the column, calculated to one decimal place. In the case of the first four poets, namely ^CUnṣurī, Farrukhī, Manūchehrī and Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, these figures correspond to the total contents of their dīwāns. However, in the case of Anvarī, given his enormous output, only the qaṣīda dīwān has been taken into consideration.

We will now turn our attention to the poetry itself. The material will be organized according to the four main thematic contexts within which references to Paradise occur, namely madīh, Nature description (ṭabīʿa), love poetry (ghazal) and, finally, zuhd poetry. Not all instances of paradisaical and prophetic usage can be examined in this analysis on account of the sheer bulk of the material under consideration. Fortunately, however, many are straightforward comparisons which hardly call for detailed attention. As a typical example, one may cite a verse by Farrukhī:

عادتى دارد بى عیب تر از صورتِ حور

صورتى دارد پاکیزه تر از درِ ثمین (1)

'His character is faultless and outshines the face of the Houri and his face is purer than the precious pearl.'

Having been included in the total statistics, further examination of such transparent usages seems unnecessary.

The following analysis will be restricted accordingly to lines which exhibit greater complexity, whether thematic, semantic or, most frequently, stylistic; indeed, a survey of the more subtle examples could well serve as an introduction to the range of rhetorical skills deployed by the poets under consideration.

STATISTICAL TABLES DEMONSTRATING THE FREQUENCY OF
EACH POET'S USE OF TERMS RELATING TO PARADISE

U = ^CUnṣurī
F = Farrukhī
M = Manūchehrī
R = Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī
A = Anvarī

	U		F		M		R		A		
	3287		8832		2777		2280		7326		
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	Total
1. Bihisht	5	1.5	5	0.6	7	2.5	6	2.6	11	1.5	34
2. Houris	1	0.3	5	0.6	9	3.2	5	2.2	10	1.4	30
3. Riḍwān Rawḍat/ Riḍwān	5	1.5	3	0.3	3	1.1	4	1.8	11	1.5	26
4. Kawthar	5	1.5	3	0.3	6	2.2	1	0.4	8	1.1	23
5. Firdaws	2	0.6	2	0.2	8	2.9	-	-	9	1.2	21
6. Tūbā	1	0.3	-	-	5	1.8	3	1.3	7	2.0	16
7. Khuld	2	0.6	-	-	2	0.7	2	0.9	4	0.5	10
8. ^C Adn	-	-	1	0.1	4	1.4	-	-	-	-	5
9. Salsabīl	-	-	-	-	5	1.8	-	-	-	-	5
10. Jannat- l-Ma'wā/ Jannat	-	-	-	-	1	0.3	1	0.4	1	0.1	3
11. Ma' Ma ^C īn	1	0.3	2	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
12. Sharāb Ṭahūr	-	-	1	0.1	-	-	1	0.4	1	0.1	3
13. Lu'lu' Manthūr/ Lu'lu' Maknūn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	1
	6.7		2.5		1.8		10.1		8.6		

A = Abū al-^CAtāhiya
 N = Abū Nuwās
 B = Al-Buḥturī
 T = Abū Tammām
 M = Al-Mutanabbī

	A		N		B		T		M		
	5501		4994		5982		7174		3660		
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	Total
1. Bihisht	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Houris	1	0.2	9	1.8	-	-	4	0.6	1	0.15	15
3. Riḍwān Rawḍat/ Riḍwān	1	0.2	1	0.2	-	-	3	0.4	-	-	5
4. Kawthar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Firdaws	3	0.5	1	0.2	1	0.15	2	0.3	-	-	7
6. Tūbā	12	2.2	-	-	-	-	1	0.1	-	-	13
7. Khuld	2	0.4	1	0.2	-	-	3	0.4	-	-	6
8. ^C Adn	-	-	-	-	1	0.15	1	0.1	-	-	2
9. Salsabil	1	0.2	1	0.2	-	-	1	0.1	-	-	3
10. Jannat- l-Ma'wā/ Jannat	6	1.1	1	0.2	-	-	2	0.3	1	0.15	10
11. Ma' Ma ^C īn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Sharāb Ṭahūr	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Lu'lu' Manthūr/ Lu'lu Maknūn	-	-	1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4.8		3.0		0.3		2.5		0.3		

madīh

The houris (hūr-al-^cīn) feature prominently in the Qur'anic narratives, occupying a high position within the hierarchical scheme which informs Paradise, where their company was offered as one of the rewards to pious believers. The word hūr suggests the contrast evident in the white of the cornea of the eye, an intense whiteness set against the deep black of the iris.⁽²⁾ This contrast in colour suggests also, and is qualified by, the contrast in the shapes of the two ocular elements, their unified image often likened to the eyes of a cow or a doe which, in turn, are likened to the eyes of beautiful women or youths. Relevant also to the first few verses to be discussed in the context of madīh is the derived transitive verb hawwara which has the meaning 'to whiten clothes or garments'.⁽³⁾ We may begin with two examples by Manūchehrī and Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī reflecting the comparative use of the term hūr common to all the poets where simile or metaphor are employed to liken the object of their description (usually the patron) to the hūr-al-^cīn - a symbol of perfection and physical beauty. Manūchehrī below, in a compound reference to the Qur'an, depicts the hūr as wearing a shirt, with himself the object of the praise:

من از اول بهشتیوار بودم

رخ من بود چون پیراهن حور (4)

'In the beginning I was as beautiful as people of Paradise, and my face (was as white as) the shirt of the houri.'

Clearly, Manūchehrī's portrayal of the hūr cannot be supported by the Qur'anic descriptions of these creatures on which the image is based since the word hūr does not appear in conjunction with the term 'shirt' in the Qur'ān.

Such deviation from the plain or strict use of the Qur'ānic term is repeated by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī in a verse in which he describes the houris adorned with pearls:

در لفظش که به تکبیر ملایک بیرند

واندر آویزند از گردن و گوش حورا (5)

'The pearls of his words are carried by the angels who cry "God is the Greatest!", and the houris hang them around their necks and place them in the lobes of their ears.'

Here, the poet demonstrates his mastery in the field of metaphor where the patron's words are likened to pearls which adorn the hūr. The use of the religious terms (angels, hūr, tabkīr) enhance the image considerably, placing it on an ethereal level, thereby affording the madīḥ exceptional status. The patron is thus given god-like qualities, the poet conferring on him in particular the value of purity in addition to the more obvious attributes of wisdom and eloquence.

^cUnşurī, in the following verse, attributes one

particular quality to the hūr for which no Qur'anic justification can be found, namely where the houri is depicted as having the capacity to reproduce:

هم سرو روان و هم بت کاشغری مرحورا را تو سخت نیکو پسری (6)

'Your body is like the swaying cypress, and your beauty is (like) the beloved idol, Khashgar, and you are (like) the (bountiful) son of the houri.'

Thus, the patron is portrayed as sleek and graceful like the tree, and beautiful like the idol with the pagan overtones of the reference to Khashgar being counterpointed by the Islamic associations present in the reference to the hūr. One can see immediately, however, not only with regard to ^CUnşurī's verse but also to those of Manūchehrī and Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī discussed above, that the term hūr, though borrowed directly from the Qur'ān, is not used at all in what one might term an orthodox Islamic context. Indeed, reference to houris bedecked in garish pearls and clothes, and idols being placed alongside Qur'anic figures could even be regarded as sacriligious.

We choose an example by Farrukhī in praise of his patron which offers a contrast in his use of the term as it stands in the Qur'ān, without adding a new dimension to it. Whilst he is hardly respectful of the Islamic spirit in which the term is invoked in the Qur'ān, he nevertheless manages to

avoid anything which could be considered to run directly counter to it:

بهروی سایل از آنگونه شادمانه شوی که روز حشر بهشتی بهروی حورالعین

(7)

'You become happy when you see the face
of the suppliant
Just as people of Paradise do (when they see)
the faces of the hūr-al-ʿīn.'

Farrukhī employs here a comparison to emphasize in a hyperbolic manner, through a daring logical inversion, the supposed perfection of the patron who is not merely impartial, but has a charitable concern so strong that it is he rather than the suppliant who experiences felicity at their meeting. Further emphasis is created by the use of the noun sā'il which adds a further dimension to the patron's concern for all his subjects, rich and poor alike.

From this vantage point, we may move on to two examples by Abū Nuwās and Abū Tammām who, in time, are nearer to Farrukhī than the remainder of the Persian poets presently under discussion.

Abū Nuwās, in a rhetorical address, and somewhat tongue in cheek, also employs the Qur'anic term hūr to illustrate his patron's generosity:

ولقد وصلت بك الرجاء ولي مندوحة لو شئت عن مصر
 فيما تناقصة الملوك من الـ حور الحسان وعاتق الخمر (8)

'I have pinned my hopes on you for (providing me with) a beautiful girl (hur-al-in), and a glass of wine, which kings compete over, though I can think of many places (better) than Egypt to come (for this purpose).'

but far from conveying the felicity of virtue, it is here made tangible in a materialistic appeal relatable to claims not only on the patron's generosity per se, but also the traditional Arab custom of diyāfa from the Jahiliyah period on, which requires the host to be generous to his guest, although the latter should not solicit for these services.⁽⁹⁾ The poet's compliment, assuming and at the same time illustrating the patron's generosity, is expressed in a straightforward manner, and the term hūr is qualified by the adjective hisān, imparting to the image of the beautiful girl an earthliness absent in the Qur'anic hūr. This is very much the work of the mājin poet, using the Qur'ānic term in its literal sense to underscore and give flesh to his imagery which betrays his leanings towards a hedonistic and materialistic existence.

Abū Tammām uses the image of the hūr as it stands in the Qur'ān unqualified by an adjective in order to emphasize the beauty of his patron over that of the hūr:

فَالْحُسْنُ مُطْرَحٌ وَالطَّيِّبُ مُفْتَضَحٌ
 وَالْحُورُ أَصْبَحَتْ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهَا
 مَنْ كَانَ لَمْ يَرِ شَمْسًا مِنْ سَنَا بَشَرٍ
 فَإِنَّا بَعْلَى قَدْ رَأَيْنَاهَا

(10)

'Beauty was abandoned (thrown away) and
 goodness
 Was put to shame
 And the houris beautiful shining sound black
 Eyes became after God, his Lord,
 If there is anyone who has not seen the
 difference
 Between the sun and the brilliance of a human
 being
 We have seen it in (the figure of) 'Alī.'

This the poet does to great effect since the efficacy of the comparison here lies not between the patron and the hūr directly, but between him and the one feature (of the face) for which the hūr are renowned in Paradise, their eyes, which the patron contrives, nevertheless, to outshine through his superior intelligence manifesting itself, in turn, into a greater beauty which the hūr cannot but acknowledge.

At this stage, we may already note the tendency, which will be further illustrated in what follows, of the Persian poets to be innovative in their use of the term hūr when compared with the more conservative earlier Arab poets. We have only found, for example, four instances where the term hūr was used by the latter, three as we mentioned above, of which two were provided by Abū Nuwās and the one by Abū Tammām discussed immediately above, and one verse by al-

Mutanabbī, an elegy.

We now propose to bring into this discussion, still within the context of madīh, other paradisaical terms employed by both Persian and Arab poets as key elements in their repertoire of praise themes, with a view to examining to what extent a poet, using the term, say, firdaws or bihisht, differs in his praise of his patron from the use of the term hūr, on a point of style or content; and to evaluating the results achieved.

Arabic firdaws, meaning the Garden of Paradise, is a Persian loanword, the original form being Pardas پردس. Its Arabic form, with the initial letter 'f', was later re-adopted back into the Persian language.⁽¹¹⁾ Lisān al-ʿArab interprets 'firdaws' to mean a 'garden', a fertile valley, a meadow, a garden in Heaven,⁽¹²⁾ or even Heaven itself. al-nihāyah fī gharīb al-ḥadīth wa-l-'athr adds to the above descriptions the notion that firdaws is a garden containing grapevines and trees, a definition that will assume an importance in a separate section dealing with examples expressed in the context of Nature poetry.⁽¹³⁾

The term 'firdaws' appears but twice in the Qur'ān, once on its own, the other in combination with janna (idāfa).⁽¹⁴⁾ The Arab poets use the term without qualification, as also do some of their Persian

counterparts; but Manūchehrī and Anvarī adorn and add to the image, imparting to it physical and abstract attributes not found in the Qur'ān, thus continuing the Persian trend to elaboration observed above in the section on the houris.

Manūchehrī's praise poetry also provides us with an instance where two Qur'anic references appear in the same line, the combination serving to enrich the technical repertoire of the poet and, at the same time, to reinforce the Islamic overtones:

این قصر خجسته که بنا کرده‌ای امسال

با غرۃ فردوس به فردوس قرینست (15)

'This is the palace of happiness you had built this year, whose rooms are equal to that of firdaws.'

The repetition of the term firdaws in the above lines could bring to mind the effect of building upwards, cleverly echoing the repetition and vertical accumulation of in the Qur'anic original, sūrat al-Zumar, 20:

لَٰكِنَّا نَبْنِئُهَا فَوْقَ سَوَافِرٍ فَتَرَوُهَا عَنْ أَدْنَىٰ سَوَافِرٍ
الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الَّذِينَ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ لِيُخْلِقَ اللَّهُ الْإِنْسَانَ

of which the verse may be seen as a structural echo, implying therefore at the same time the gardens beyond,

through which the rivers run.

A recurrent image throughout the works of the Arab and Persian poets expressed in the context of madīh is that of the pen, whether referred to directly or indirectly; the poet often invokes it in comparison with a paradisaical term in order to praise the patron's literary abilities, or even the poetry which serves as the vehicle through which the patron is praised. The following verse by Anvarī finds him particularly imaginative in the use of imagery, demonstrating the power of the patron through the pen in which his saliva becomes a metaphor for the ink. This assumes a physical property that, in its manifestation, 'weaves' to produce simultaneously a positive, friendly effect on his supporters and a deadly effect on his enemies:

منسوج لعابش چه نسیجیست کز و ملک یکسر همه بر صورت فردوس و سعیر ست

(16)

'What material does the saliva of your pen
weave?
From it at one and the same time the Kingdom
becomes like firdaws and sa'īr.'

The patron's abilities are likened to those possessed by God, but in a way that metaphorically pre-empts one of the functions of God, viz. to mete out punishment or reward on the Last Day, because the patron is allowed to do this on

earth.

The two examples we provide by the Arab poets conform, by way of contrast, to the Qur'anic text in the use of the term 'firdaws', showing little if any deviation. The manner, however, in which the image is invoked in both is hardly respectful of the Islamic spirit that the term normally invokes.

al-Buḥturī employs the term 'jannat al-firdaws' (Garden of Paradise) in a supplication, conferring on his patron a sense of nobility, endorsed by this term in the Qur'ān:

وَجُزِيتَ أَعْلَى رُتْبَةٍ مَّأْمُولَةٍ ، فِي جَنَّةِ الْفِرْدَوْسِ ، غَيْرَ مُعَجَّلٍ
(17)

'You were given the highest position one could hope for in jannat al-firdaws (and yet you did not need to make) any effort.'

The patron's position is enhanced thereby considerably, and he is deemed to be a leader who occupies his position by natural birthright, an absolute monarch whose secular rule is underscored by divine sanction.

Abū Tammām, for his part, in his praise of his patron Mālik b. Ṭawq, adopts a tone of humility in keeping with the nature of his description of his palace which is compared to Paradise:

كَأَنَّهَا جَنَّةُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ مُعْرِضَةً وَلَيْسَ لِي عَمَلٌ زَالٍ فَأَدْخُلُهَا (18)

'As if it were the heavenly Paradise, turning away from me, since I had not performed a good deed to commend me to enter it.'

inferring that his patron must be a very pious man who should not be tainted with the company of a lesser mortal, in what amounts to a deification of the patron by the poet here.

It is noticeable that the Arab poets use the term 'firdaws' without using complicated metaphor and without elaboration, unlike the Persian poets discussed above. The Arab poets undoubtedly use paradisaical material for purposes of comparison as a rhetorical means to strengthen the secular power of their patron through divine sanction, but achieving this in a direct manner, as much through the structure of the language as in its manipulation, working with the material at hand rather than seeking to effect a process of moulding an image through adornment. The Persians rely on the latter to convey the power of the patron in their images by emphasizing his qualities, generosity, strength, and so on through association with aesthetic images expressed through complex metaphors - pearls as words and saliva as ink in Anvarī's work.

We find this contrast between Arab and Persian continues in what amounts to a considerable use of the term rawḍat riḍwān or riḍwān in their poetry. Lisān al-^cArab interprets the term as 'a meadow, verdant tract of land, somewhat swampy, or an unploughed stretch of land covered with grass and flowers, mentioned also in connection with the Gardens of Paradise.'⁽¹⁹⁾

The noun 'riḍwān' by itself denotes a treasurer, keeper, or guardian of Paradise. Taken verbally as a maṣḍar, it means pleasure, contentment, assent, approval, goodwill, delight. The complete term rawḍat riḍwān has the literal meaning 'a garden of the keeper of Paradise' or, simply, 'a garden of Paradise' which, as it stands in the Qur'ān, symbolizes beauty and perfection.⁽²⁰⁾ However, the Persian poets rarely limit themselves to the exact image of rawḍat riḍwān as it stands in the Qur'ān.

The elaboration of this image is most evident in Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's work, used to praise his patron on the occasion of his enthronement, in conjunction with other Qur'anic terms such as tūbā and takbīr, all of which should be studied to appreciate the unity of the rhetorical image conveyed here:

کری کند که بر آئی بخشاک رود کری
میان هر دوسه گامی نهالی از طوبی

یکی برای تماشا بخشاک رود بر آی
نهاده گوئی رضوان بشاهراهن بر

بنفس ناطقه تكبير كرد وايدون گفت كه قصر خسرو كعبه است و خشك رود منى (21)

'Come to Khushkrūd once to view it, for even drowsiness would appreciate your visit. (Then it would be) as if riḍwān opened his wings and placed branches of the tūbā tree every two or three steps along the (patron's) main path. He (riḍwān) said: "God is the Greatest" (adding that) the king's palace is Al-Ka^Cba and Khushkrūd Mina'.'

Inviting his patron to visit Khushkrūd, the poet shows an effective use of hyperbole by saying that even sleep would appreciate and welcome his visit. The association of the place and the patron's palace with the sacred places of Mina' and the Ka^Cba respectively underscore the madīh, conferring on the patron a religious importance. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī in this poem elaborates on two aspects of the riḍwān image alone by, on the one hand, speaking of the heavenly gatekeeper as strewing branches along the path of the poet's patron and, on the other, by attributing the power of speech to him, elaboration which is not justified by the Qur'anic text.

^CUnşurī and Manūchehrī also display a superb skill in the use of hyperbole in their respective tributes to their patrons, and both feature an effective contrast between the images of Hell and Paradise, the former poet showing how the patron wields power over Hell:

گردد سقر از خدمت او روضه رضوان

گسرواصف خلقش فکند دم بسقر بر (22)

'Should the one who praises his patron take a
breath from Hell, then Hell would be
rawḍat riḍwān.'

and the latter emphasizing the patron's overwhelming
generosity again in a successful hyperbolic manner:

گر نسیم کرمش بر در دوزخ به جهد

هاویه خوبتر از روضه رضوان گردد (23)

'If the breeze of his generosity blows on the
door of Hell, the Pit becomes better than
rawḍat riḍwān.'

Unlike in the previous sections we have examined, namely
hūr and firdaws, the poets, with the exception once again
of Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī here, do not use the term
rawḍat riḍwān in a particularly un-Islamic manner. In
Farrukhi's example below, however, this attitude remains
muted as he seeks to give expression to a particular
condition or state to be associated with the patron through
the use of rawḍat riḍwān:

ولایت تو زامن ای امیر چون حرم است

زخرمی وخوشی همچو روضه رضوان (24)

'Oh Prince, your state, because of its security is like al-Haram.
(And) because of the pleasure and happiness (that lies within) your state resembles rawḍat riḍwān.'

We detect even less elaboration of this term in the poetry of Abū Tammām on this subject. He uses rawḍat riḍwān in a straightforward manner in a madīḥ poem which has as its object an elector about to cast his vote for the man to succeed to the Caliphate, recalling the politico-religious atmosphere of the early Caliphate period when a shura, assembly, was convened in Madīna to elect Muḥammad's successor, Abū Bakr:

هِيَ بَيْعَةُ الرِّضْوَانِ يُشْرَعُ وَسَطُهَا
بَابُ السَّلَامَةِ فَادْخُلُوا بِسَلَامٍ (25)

'It is an act of homage providing satisfaction, through which the door to safety becomes accesible: Enter it then peacefully.'

But at the same time the Qur'anic echo implies that whoever is privileged to participate in such a notable act is guaranteed a place in Paradise guarded by the riḍwān. Here, once again, the Arab poet, through the use of this paradisaical term, attached great importance to the religious aspect of the patron's rule, via the praise of one of his electors.

The terms bihisht and kawthar, whether expressed in thematic context of madīh, ghazal, or ṭabīʿa, remain the sole province of the Persian poets. This may be expected in the case of bihisht which is a Persian word for Paradise and does not appear in the Qur'an; but that kawthar should also only appear in Persian poetry is rather puzzling. One possible explanation as to why the Arabs chose to ignore the use of this term in their poetry may be related to the special significance it has for the Prophet Muḥammad. But whatever the reason, it is clear that the Persians felt no such compunction, and not only often used the term al-kawthar - a river in Paradise from which all other rivers flow (described by Lane as whiter than milk and sweeter than honey) ⁽²⁶⁾ - to emphasize the patron's generosity but also cited it in religious contexts. A striking example is Manucehri's reference to kawthar in his description of wine to emphasize the munificence of his patron:

دو کوثر بر آن دو کف دست اوست بهشت برین را بود کوثری (27)

'Two kawthar, one on each palm, but for Upper Paradise only one.'

Here, the object of the description is the patron's palms as symbols of munificence, the two kawthar representing wine bottles in which the wine is described as being more abundant than the heavenly river. The poet thus

inverts the original meaning of the term conveyed in the Qur'anic context, associating the rewards of the virtuous with the forbidden pleasures of wine-drinking.

Anvarī also places the object of his description above that which is implied by the term kawthar in the line:

که از دست فردوس دست بعثرت می خوشتر از آب کوثر گرفته (28)

'Your hand is equal to the hand of firdaws for its enjoyment and the Wine in it is better than the Water of al-kawthar.'

using a hyperbolic comparison to show the high quality of his patron's wine. The only elaboration detectable in the use of this term is found in Manuchehri's line above in which he refers to two kawthars, where only one is to be found in the Qur'an.

As for the employment of bihisht in Persian poetry, this term seems to have been used as a substitute word for the Arabic Paradise (firdaws) but is used mainly to emphasize Islamic values in the patron's character. A typical example is ^cUnşurī's in which is invoked eight descriptions pertaining to Paradise, to be ascribed to the patron by the hand of God:

خاصه کردش بهشت چیز خدای
 زندگانی و ملک و دولت و دین
 که بدان هشت دیدش اندر خور
 پادشاهی و عدل و فضل و نظر (29)

'God chose eight things in Paradise, and he
 saw that they were worthy of him:
 Life, Kingdom, State, Religion, Ruling,
 Justice, Virtue and Insight.'

The eight provide a comprehensive list of the attributes
 necessary for the successful ruler, although the line is
 perhaps even more interesting for its simple but effective
 technique of accumulation than for the logic of its ideas.
 Elsewhere, Anvarī uses this word to describe his patron's
 palace and garden, in a hyperbolic manner, conferring on
 them Godlike qualities:

و بحدک ای صورت منصوریه باغی و سرای یا بهشتی که بدنیاست فرستاد خدای
 (30)

'What a picture you are, what a garden you
 have, what a palace.
 Or are you a paradise that God sent to the
 worlds?'

The rhetorical question assumes, of course, the answer
 to be in favour of the patron at the expense of Paradise.

The paradisaical term tūbā, as it stands in the Qur'ān,
 is a symbol of Perfection and a reward for piety. It is
 taken to mean a certain tree in Paradise and, by extension,

a pleasant life ('sat under the shade of the tūbā tree'). Hence the Qur'anic expression, 'A good final state shall be their lot' (tūbā lahum wa ḥusn ma'āb), granted as a reward for living a pious life.⁽³¹⁾ Religious considerations in this respect may have played an important part in the Arab poets' decision, as with kawthar, to neglect this term as material to be used in their madīḥ poetry. Abū al-^cAtāhiya, however, has written no less than twelve examples using this term in his zuhd poetry (which we propose to discuss later) probably from those same religious considerations which frightened away the madīḥ poets.

But again, as with kawthar, we find the Persian poets paying scant respect to the Islamic spirit which this Qur'anic expression invokes and, consequently, somewhat distorting or exaggerating the image as it stands in the Qur'ān in order to suit their own poetical ideas. Manūchehrī, for example, elaborates on this image by casting riḍwān, the guardian of Paradise, in the role of the carrier or bearer of the patron's aura, expressed as a metaphor for his nobility:

ملك مسعود بن محمود بن ناصر لدين الله
(32) که در ضوان زینت طوبی برد، از بوی اخلاقش

'riḍwān carried the perfume of King Mas^cūd b. Maḥmūd b. Nāṣir li Din Allah's Nobility to adorn the tūbā.'

This image is very much underscored by the hidden presence of Nature, recalling the process of fertilization or the image of a bee making its way to and fro, pollinating flowers. In this way, Manūchehrī has managed to combine praise of his patron, incorporating into his portrayal by suggestion a description of Nature and, in doing so, placed the object of his description above that of the tūbā tree, as does Anvarī in the following line, where he uses a metaphor to honour the patron he wishes to laud:

جهان همت تست آنکه طوبی کند در روضهای او گیاهی
(33)

'The world of your power and inclination makes
tuba in its gardens seem like grass.'

Here, Anvari portrays tūbā as something contemptible in comparison with his patron's power, creating a form of hyperbole which proves very effective.

This is an appropriate point to look back on the terms we have hitherto covered, hūr, firdaws, bihisht, kawthar, rawḍat al-riḍwān and tūbā, to see if any common factors have emerged to link the works of the Arab and Persian poets with regard to style and theme, bringing into this discussion also the remainder of this madīh section consisting of several miscellaneous pieces. We shall then move on to discuss those examples expressed in the thematic

contexts of ghazal, ṭabī^ca and, finally, zuhd poetry.

In madīh, it becomes apparent that all the poets under discussion here are inclined to dilute or even disregard the spirit of the original context of the paradisaical terms they borrow to enrich their poetry, principally because of the very nature of the context in which they have to operate, predisposed as they are to place their patrons on the same level as, and frequently above, the Qur'anic figures, locations and objects to which they are being related. In doing so, it is the Persians who show the most innovation, with the result that, considered from a narrowly religious perspective, some of their utterances verge on blasphemy.

The Arab poets, for their part, are more restrained in their use of simile and metaphor and, with the exception of Abū Nuwās, show little, if any, hyperbole in their work. The very idea of adorning Qur'anic figures with pearls and robes, as Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī and Manūchehrī do in their employment of the ḥūr figures, to be used as metaphors either enlarging or enhancing a particular characteristic of the patron, would have been repugnant to a pious Arab Muslim whose psychology, education and language are firmly rooted in the Holy Qur'ān. The Arab poets themselves would have found it very difficult to escape the influence of such an ethos. The exception is, as we mentioned above,

Abū Nuwās, nearer in spirit and inclination to Persian rather than Arab culture. We have seen, indeed, that he may have influenced Manūchehrī in his choice of imagery to clothe the houris with.⁽³⁴⁾

In a broader sense, by contrasting the earlier examples of the Arab poets with those of the later Persian models, we can see to a certain extent - in this particular context more than any other, perhaps - that the innovatory injection of the beauties of Paradise, used as terms of comparison for the ruler, may be viewed as symptomatic of a more general shift in Islamic society within which the patron is addressed less as a warrior hero or protector of Islam, as with al-Buḥturī, than the embodiment of a social and cultural ideal, best expressed by a concentration on one particular aspect of the patron's character as, say, in Anvarī's line in which the paradisaical term lu'lu' manthūr ('scattered pearls') is used for the one and only time:

وانگه از پیرایه عدل توتا عید دگر کردن و گوش جهان پر لؤلؤ منشور باد
(35)

'The neck and ear of the World
Should be full of lu'lu' manthūr
Because of the beauty of your Justice.'

Anvarī shows here how widespread and fundamental the justice of his patron is, likened as it is to 'scattered pearls'. Such is not meant to suggest, however, that

previous roles are abandoned: the same Anvarī is quite capable of a traditional appeal to the patron in his role as defender of his people and, indeed, in so doing, of yoking Islamic terminology to a national rather than religious cause:

که کنی فارغ و آسوده دل خلق خدا زین فرومایه غز شوم بی غارت گر
آخر ایران که از بودی فردوس بر شک وقف خواهد شد تا حشر برین شوم حشر (36)

'Relieve people's hearts from these bloody,
accursed (ghuz) invaders.
Has God decreed that Iran, which firdaws
always used to envy, should belong to these
people forever.'

But we can see from the above that in espousing such a cause, very little respect is paid to Islam.

tabī'a (description of Nature)

In general, the Arab and Persian poets, in employing paradisaical terms in their dīwāns in the context of Nature description and love poetry, have the same objective in mind as was apparent in the section covering madīh, namely to compare in Nature the beauties of the man-made garden with those of Paradise, and in love poetry (ghazal), to extend the range of references for the beloved, and the scale of perfection in which he/she may be placed by the lover/poet.

What emerges from the comparison between the beauties of the man-made garden and those of Paradise is an image of Nature evocative of the smells of herbs and grasses, of perfumes and colour, presenting a panoramic view of the region in which most of the Persian poets were born and raised, Khurāsān⁽³⁷⁾, a fertile region, rich in vegetation. Poets of the stature of Manūchehrī could not but be affected by such an environment and feel obliged to pay homage to it, choosing in doing so to employ certain paradisaical terms to enrich and embellish their poetry.

Several of these characteristics of Nature find expression in the following line of Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī in which is employed appropriately the term rawḍat, a meadow rich in grass and flowers, used in conjunction with Paradise (janna):

نافه های تبت کشاده سبا روضه های بهشت زاده طلل (38)

'The gentle breeze of the East Wind (ṣabā) releases the musk of the Tibetan mountain, and the garden of Paradise brings forth the dew.'

The metaphor here is successful in conveying the beauty and tranquility of the scene he is depicting and, at the same time, adheres to the spirit of the Qur'anic original. In the section on maḍīh we noted the contrary with riḍwān

being interpreted in a specifically un-Islamic and hyperbolic fashion to produce greater emphasis in the contrast between one element and another (Hell and riḍwān in Manūchehrī's example, for instance) and to depict the impossible as actual with a view to enhancing the position of the patron. In Nature poetry, such deviation is the exception, although examples may be found in which the straightforward nature-paradise equation is associated with other earthly delights of a decidedly irreligious nature. Thus, Farrukhī uses bihisht-i-^cadn in a four-fold description which associates images of Nature with wine and pagan idols, the whole being organised within the rhetorical structure known as jam^c wa taqsīm:

بدین خرمی جهان ، بدین تازگی بهار بدین روشنی شراب ، بدین نیکویی نگار
یکی چون بهشت عدن یکی چون هوای دوست یکی چون گلاب بلخ یکی چون بت بهار
(39)

'The beauty of the World, the freshness of Spring,
The purity of wine, the beauty of the idol.
The first is like Paradise of Eden
The second is like perfumes of the beloved,
The third is like the rose water of Balkh,
The fourth is like the idols of the Buddhist temple.'

By way of contrast, Manūchehri's depiction of Nature below, using a straightforward simile, is self-contained and controlled:

چو خوراندنر گسها، همه سیمین طبق بر سر نهاده بر طبقها بر ز زر ساو ساغر ها
(40)

'The Narcissus flowers appear like houris
Carrying silver plates on their heads, and
On the plates are cups of pure gold.'

This incorporates the houri within a new, vibrant image lacking in the madīh section, through which the narcissus flower is given substance and shape, its colours successfully evoked and heightened. Here the image of the houris is used stylistically, devoid of any religious meaning. We find that generally this pattern is repeated throughout the section on Nature.

In his description of Spring, Manuchehri condenses the image invoked by the term ʿadn as it appears in the Qur'ān, comparing the vitality of Spring in all its colour with the Garden of Eden:

بارنگ و نكار جنت العدنى با نور و ضياء ليله القدرى
(41)

'You are in your colours and beautiful
appearance
The garden of Eden,
You are in your light and illumination laylat
al-qadr.'

The reference to laylat al-qadr, the night in which, according to Sura 97, the Qur'an was revealed, further enhances the spiritual dimension of this description.

In two other verses, Manūchehri uses the expression bihisht-i ʿadn instead of jannat al-ʿadn. The first of these is a simple simile describing the arrival of Spring:

اندر آمد نوبهاری چون مہی چون بہشت عدن شد ہر مہمی (42)

'Spring arrived like the Moon; the plains
Became like the Gardens of Eden.'

The simplicity of the poet's description, however, masks his consummate technique, notably his use of chiasmus to bring about the association of the Moon with Paradise, two celestial elements which suggest the cool, refreshing ambience associated with the arrival of Spring. The second verse, representing a more adventurous attempt, asks why one should wish to embellish Nature which is so beautiful already:

بر دم طاووس خواہی کرد نقشی خوبتر ؟
در بہشت عدن خواہی کشت شاخ نارون ؟ (43)

'Do you want to paint the tail (feathers)
of
The peacock to add to its beauty, or do
you
Want to plant in the Garden of Eden a
branch
Of the Nārvan (sour cherry) tree.'

Interestingly, the poet uses the Eden metaphor without any reference to the nature it represents.

In terms of usage, we may note that both Farrukhi and Manūchehrī adapt the Qur'anic phrase jannat ^Cadn to Persian norms by substituting bihisht. Only the original form, of course, is used by Arab poets, as in the following line by Abū Nuwās:

(44) سُنَّمٌ مِنْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ لَهَا فِي قَصَبِ الْعَقِيَانِ أَنْهَارٌ

'Sunnām is one of the Gardens of Eden,
Having rivers in Qaşab al-^CIqyān.'

Elsewhere, Manūchehrī paints a picture with the term tubā, conveying an idyllic image of nature that, with the added dimension of music, comes to resemble Arcadia more than Paradise:

جو طوبی گشت شاخ بید و شاخ سر و نوژ و گل
(45) نشسته ارغنون سازان بزیر سایه طوبی

'The branches of the willow, cypress, pine
Tree and the rose-bush, became like the tubā
tree,
Under whose shade the organ players sat.'

Here Manūchehrī deviates considerably from the original Qur'anic image as he reinforces the image of Nature, redolent of the wafts of pine and other smells, by imbuing it with God-like qualities and, by introducing the element

of music, adds a further dimension to the image. Although the poet here places the object of description on the same level as the tūbā tree, he does so by using a straightforward comparison by which one image of inanimate vegetation is likened to another. Where, however, the images of Nature are likened to what Islam considers to be controversial objects, namely wine and idols, as in Farrukhī's rendition, then we see that there begins to emerge the un-Islamic element peculiar to the madīh section.

ghazal (love poetry)

By the nature of its content, love poetry, which relies on paradisaical material to extend terms of comparison, will reveal in its lines un-Islamic elements, for the poet is bound to place his beloved on the same level as and frequently above the Qur'anic figures to whom he/she is being compared. This trend has, of course, already been noted in the section on madīh but in ghazal poetry the emphasis changes, with the poet's description of his beloved assuming an intimate, personal hue, betraying a concern for emotions and the feelings he holds towards him/her rather than the need to enhance a particular quality of that person. The relationship also between the poet and his beloved takes on a more immediate, intimate meaning than is apparent in that between the poet and the patron.

This aspect of love poetry is more pronounced in the works of the Arab poets. Abū Tammām, for example, in a compound reference to the Qur'ān, imbues his idealization of his patron with a religious significance in this ghazal section to a madīḥ poem:

صَارَ ذَنْبِي كَذَنْبِ آدَمَ يَا عَمَّ
رُو فَأُخْرِجْتُ مِنْ جَنَّاتِ الْخُلُودِ (46)

'O 'Amr, my sin has become comparable to
That of Adam
And I (too) have now been expelled from the
Paradise of Eternity.'

the poet thus playing the part of the rejected beloved, denied access for a time to the patron's palace which is likened to Paradise.

Farrukhī's description of his beloved provides a particularly complicated and elaborate example, as he attempts to compare her to an aspect of Paradise:

به بر پرند و پرندش چو یا سمین سپید
به رخ بهار و بهارش چو روضه رضوان (47)

'Silk lies on her body and her stature is like
White jasmine,
Her face looks like the face of Spring which
looks
Like rawḍat riḍwān.'

In this contrast lies the fundamental difference between the Arab and Persian poets, not only in their respective portrayals of their beloveds but in their depictions of the patron also. The Arab poet manages to express through his verses his sentiments and feelings quite effectively, just as concerned with the person himself as the image given of him. This earthliness of the Arab poet is reflected and effectively illustrated in the following verse by Abū Tammām using the image of the hūr:

(48) عَطَفُوا الْخُدُورَ عَلَى الْبُدُورِ وَوَكَّلُوا
ظِلْمَ السُّتُورِ بِحُجُورِ عَيْنِ نَهْدٍ

'They closed the partition, hiding the moons
(budūr)
And they entrusted the darkness beyond
The curtains to the full breasted houris.'

Although within the nasīb section, this line can be viewed essentially as a prelude to the following madīh, implying praise for the beauty of the womenfolk of the patron's household and, at the same time, for his power in being able to ensure their proper seclusion, all the more important given their physical attractions, made particularly tangible - shocking almost - by qualifying the image of inhabitants of Paradise with the physically specific attribute nuhhad.

The Persian poet, however, concentrates more on the

presentation of the image, which is often devoid of feeling. We observed this tendency in the examples on the Persian poets in the section on madīh where the patron is portrayed as the embodiment of a cultural ideal, his characteristics and attributes, be they abstract or physical, employed as elements along with the paradisaical term salsabīl,⁽⁴⁹⁾ which, in this context, is suggestive of a gossamer-like substance:

(50) در لبشان سلسبیل در کفشان یاسمین

'In their lips is salsabīl and in
Their hands jasmine.'

portraying the saliva as salsabīl; although this term is sometimes applied as an epithet to water, to apply it in this manner constitutes elaboration on the Qur'anic image.

The remaining three verses to be considered in this section are all composed by Abū Nuwās, portraying each time the beauty of boys, for whom the poet had a sexual preference. Their beauty is, in each case, enhanced through an association with the figure of the hūr although only in one does the poet stick to the term as it stands in the Qur'ān. The first verse contains an animal reference - a feature notably absent in Persian poetry - as well as revealing his sexual predilection, managing to combine the two through the use of the term hūr:

قمران، بل شمسان بين غمامة فهما هواي من الأنام ههما
 قمرأ وهما اللذان إذا يقال: تَمَنِّي لم أعد من حورالطيباء سواهما
 (51) وهما اللذان إذا يقال: تَمَنِّي لم أعد من حورالطيباء سواهما
 (51)

'Two moons, nay, two Suns appearing through
 the clouds
 They are my utmost desire
 Of those two I could say: If I was offered a
 Gift I would not choose any but these two
 From amongst the houris (like) gazelles.'

The imagery invoked of the two moons and two suns
 (recalling the boys faces) compared to the gazelle, noted
 for its large eyes, is enhanced by the latter's conjunctive
 relationship with the hūrī figure. Similarly, the boys in
 the second verse are likened to the hūr al-^cawātī,
 literally 'houris with long limbs':

جعلت له بما آتبه عقلاً ليعذر في هوى الخثور العواطي
 (52)

'I have explained to and made him (the patron)
 understand my love for the hūr al-^cawātī.'

The image of a tall, sleek boy emerges from the above
 lines in what amounts to a justification of the poet's
 sexual preference. The image of the gazelle appears again
 in the third example, where Abū Nuwās expresses his love
 for the boy by portraying him in an ethereal light, with
 the figure of the hūr-al-^cīn, with whom he is being

associated, featuring prominently:

غزال* ليس مخلوقاً كخلق الناس من طين
ولكن صيغ من مسك وأرواح الرياحين
نشأ في جنة الخلد مع الحور - بها - العرين
(53)

'He is (gazelle) created from clay (like the
rest of Mankind)
But formed from amber and the perfume of sweet
basil
And has been reared in the eternal garden,
(Paradise) in the company of the hūr-al-ʿīn.'

Referring to the interpretation of the term hūr given by the Encyclopaedia of Islam, we find the hūr being constituted of saffron, musk, amber and camphor. From this description, one can deduce that the poet may have held these interpretations in mind when describing his beloved, and certainly Abū Nuwās manages to portray the hūr in a new vibrant light conveying an image of colour above all, in a way that recalls Manūchehrī's representation of the hūr as bedecked narcissus flowers.

A quite different tone and technique are to be found in Abū al-^cAtāhiya:

يَا رَبِّ لَوْ أَنْسَيْتَنِيهَا بِمَا فِي جَنَّةِ الْفِرْدَوْسِ لَمْ أَنْسَهَا
(54)

'Oh God, if you tried to make me forget
Her in the Garden of Paradise, I wouldn't
be able to.'

Such a reversal of values, and the particular intensity of emotional attachment it conveys, is the more remarkable coming from a poet most known for his insistence on the rewards of piety. It may also be noted that he uses the paradisaical term without qualification or elaboration, as it stands in the Qur'ān. As with the other Arab poets, he tends to manipulate the image without having recourse to the rhetorical flourishes common among the Persians.

Finally, in this section, we may mention a line from a section of a poem that, taken in isolation, would fall under the heading of hunting poetry (waṣf al-ṣayd) in which the ḥūr is used as a synonym for a beautiful deer:

لم يقها الله من المحذور ثم أقال في اقتناص الختور (55)

'God did not protect her from her fate;
Then it (the dog) set to hunting down the
ḥūr.'

This particular usage is unique to Abū Nuwās among the Arab poets, and was not taken up by the Persians. (56)

zuhd poetry

One might say, by way of concluding this chapter on the use of paradisaical terms in the dīwāns of the Arab and Persian poets with a section on zuhd poetry, that whereas the poetry of Manūchehrī and the other Persian poets could only be presented and understood at the court, and the poetry of Abū Nuwās only comprehended by the mediaeval equivalent of cafe society and the intelligentsia, Abū al-^CAtāhiya's zuhd poetry, with its simple style and use of vocabulary, clearly appealed to the man in the street. Abu al-^CAtāhiya's poetry offers, on the one hand, an effective religious counterpoint to the secular poetry practised by the Persians (and Abū Nuwās) in the field of madīḥ and ghazal, and his simple style (as well as appealing to the man in the street) offering a contrast in poetic technique to the sophisticated rhetorical methods employed by the Persians and, to a lesser extent, by his Arab compatriots, most evident in the section on madīḥ. The majority of his examples in this context appear in the form of an appeal, du^Cā', urging the citizens to live out the pious existence which he considers a pre-condition to entry into Paradise on the Last Day, as expressed below, using the term tūbā to underscore this point:

لِلّٰهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ طوبى لِمُعْتَبِرٍ ذَكَورِ
(57)

'The outcome of life is (determined) by
God,
Let this tūbā therefore be conferred on him
who takes heed and who continually thinks
of Him.'

The term tūbā is taken from the Qur'anic expression 'a
good and final state to be his lot' - tūbā lahum wa ḥusn
ma'āb⁽⁵⁸⁾ - and is therefore not to be equated with the
tūbā in Paradise referred to by the other poets: it
inhabits not the world of sensual metaphor but the moral
world of recompense for virtue. Nevertheless, it appears
here that the poet is stressing the predestinarian aspect
of God who determines the outcome of life for all mankind.
His tūbā is therefore offered here as a reward to those who
have accepted this fait accompli.

We may contrast this attitude with that expressed by
Anvarī above (p.85) who challenges God's grand design
through the praise of his patron as a warrior cum saviour
of his land, in which he elaborates on the term firdaws,
using it to disparage, rather than, like Abū al-^CAtāhiya,
pay homage to God.

Another contrast to Abū al-^CAtāhiya's verse is provided
in madīḥ again by Anvarī in what amounts to an irreligious
attempt to laud the patron by portraying tūbā, against whom
the patron is being effectively counterpointed, in a
contemptible and hyperbolic fashion. Thus, Anvarī here

offers both an effective secular counterpoint to the religious poetry of Abū al-^CAtāhiya and an example of the difference in the poetic style obtaining between these two men in particular, and between the Arab and Persian poet in general.

In the only fresh example composed by a Persian poet that we intend to discuss in this context, Farrukhī offers a view of monotheism that provides an interesting contrast to Abū al-^CAtāhiya's views as to how the principles of Islam, as contained in the Qur'ān, should be interpreted and lived:

فردوس یابند بتوحید خداوند توحید خداوند خرد کرد پدیدار
(59)

'By declaring God to be one, the people
will
Attain firdaws
For the declaration of unity purifies the
mind.'

Clearly, Farrukhī is echoing above the orthodox Sunnite view of Islam, that one has only to bear testimony (shahada) to the fact that there is no God but Allāh to secure for himself a place in Paradise, irrespective of what kind of life he has led on earth. Thus, firdaws is not seen as a reward only for the Muslim who has led a pious life, as Abū al-^CAtāhiya would have it:

إِنَّ الْعُقُولَ لَذَاهِلَاتٌ غَافِلَاتٌ لَاهِيَةٌ
(60) إِنَّ الْعُقُولَ عَنِ الْجَنَّةِ نِ وَحُورٍ مِّنْ لَّسَاهِيَةٍ

'People's minds are stunned, unaware (of God) by their immersion in life's pleasures, renouncing Paradise and the hūr because of their hedonism.'

With the skilfull use of the Qur'anic terms above, the poet here is implying that to live a wanton life leads the sinner not so much to Hell as to exclude him from enjoying a heavenly existence which the life on earth cannot even begin to be compared with, namely the chance to loll in Paradise in the company of beautiful hūr girls. Thus, these terms, or rather the images that they evoke in the Qur'ān, are used as inducements to the Muslim to counteract the thrills to be experienced from an earthly experience, in the company of women, drinking wine, as advocated by Abu Nuwas:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي الْعَيْشِ إِلَّا فِي الْمَجُونِ مَعَ الْـ
(61) أَكْنَافِ وَالْحُورِ وَالنَّسْرِينَ وَالْأَسْرِ

'Life is worthless unless spent in frivolity in the company of (social) equals, beautiful women (hūr), wild roses and myrtles.'

Here, surely, is the antithesis to zuhd poetry, Abū Nuwās inducing his fellow men to forget about Paradise and enjoy life on earth. Stylistically, one may note that both

poets use the above paradisaical terms in a manipulative manner to reinforce their respective and antithetical messages, but neither indulges in the elaboration typical of Persian poets.

Abū al-^cAtāhiya, in the following two verses, invites the sinner to repent before the Last Day of Judgement, when it will have been too late:

(62) إِذَا أَذْكَرَتْكَ النَّفْسُ دُنْيَا دُنْيَا فَلَا تَنْسَ رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَانِ وَخُلْدَهَا

'If your soul reminds you of how this life is
Don't forget the Garden of Paradise (rawḍāt
al-jinān) that endures forever.'

and continues ironically:

(63) أَلَا هَلْ إِلَى الْفِرْدَوْسِ مِنْ مُتَشَوِّقٍ تَحْنُ إِلَيْهَا نَفْسُهُ وَإِلَى عَدْنٍ

'Is there anyone longing or yearning for
Paradise (firdaws)?'

a rhetorical question which implies the aside 'or are you too busy living a life of sin.'

From the above two verses, we may note again the Arabs' reluctance to use firdaws metaphorically in the manner of the Persians. They are expressed also in a simple style

using plain vocabulary understood by even the lowliest Muslim. In the verse below, however, Abū al-^CAtāhiya allows himself a little indulgence in hyperbole, using the paradisaical term jannat al-khuld:

عَجِبْتُ لِلنَّارِ نَامَ رَاهِبُهَا وَجَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ نَامَ رَاغِبُهَا (64)

'I am amazed concerning hell that he
who fears it remains oblivious,
and concerning eternal paradise that
he who desires it remains oblivious.'

The contrast between the images of Hell and Paradise, enhanced by the use of the term jannat al-khuld, is given further emphasis by the play on the meaning, 'to sleep'. The Sinner, oblivious of the fire of Hell which he will surely enter, is presented in the image of a blind man, whilst the pious Muslim dons the image of modesty and propriety.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- (1) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.287.
- (2) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Wāqī^cah LVI, 22, 23.
﴿٢٢﴾ وَحُورٌ عِينٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ كَأَمْثَالِ اللَّوْلُوءِ الْمَكْنُونِ
Sūrat al-Tūr LII, 20.
﴿٥٤﴾ كَذَلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينِ
Sūrat al-Dukhān XLIV, 54.
See Ibn Manẓūr, Lissān al-ʿArab, Vol.XIII, Beirut, 1956, p.302.
Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Qutr al-Muḥīt, Vol.1, S.V. hawwara, Beirut, 1869, pp.470-471.
- (3) E.W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Vol.I, Cambridge, 1984, p.665.
A.J. Wensinck, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.III, Leiden, London, 1971, pp.581-582.
Muḥammad Asad, The Message of the Qur'ān, Gibraltar, 1980, note.15, p.635.
- (4) Manūchehri, Dīwān, p.39.
- (5) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, (ed. Muḥammad Mahdavi Dāmghānī), Mashhad, 1347 A.H., p.5
- (6) ʿUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.298.
- (7) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.294.
- (8) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.458.
- (9) R. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1969, p.85.
- (10) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.IV, p.285.
- (11) Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Qutr al-Muḥīt, S.V. Fardas.
- (12) Ibn Manẓūr, Vol.VI, p.163.
- (13) Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihayah fi Gharīb al-Hadīth wa al-Athar, (ed. Tahir Aḥmad al-Zawī and Maḥmud Muḥammad al-Taṇāḥī), Vol.III, Cairo, 1963, p.427.

- (14) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mu'minūn XXIII, 11
﴿١١﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرْتُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ.
Sūrat al-Kahf XVIII, 107.
﴿١٠٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا
- (15) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.217.
- (16) Anvarī, Dīwān, (ed. Mudarris Razavī), Vol.I, Tehran, 1337 H.sh., p.71.
- (17) al-Buhturī, Dīwān, Vol.I, Beirut, n.d., p.21.
- (18) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.III, p.48.
- (19) Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-^cArab, Vol.VII, pp.162-163.
Muḥammad Murtaḍa al-Zubaidī, Tāj al-^cArūs, Beirut, 1966, pp.38-40.
- (20) E.W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Vol.!, p.1100.
Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Rūm XXX, 15.
﴿١٥﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ.
Sūrat al-Shūrā XLII, 22.
﴿٢٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ
Sūrat al-Tawba IX, 72.
وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
- (21) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.148.
- (22) ^cUnşurī, Dīwān, p.139.
- (23) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.220.
- (24) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.328.
- (25) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.III, p.207.
- (26) E.W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Vol.II, p.2594.
Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Kawthar CVIII, 1.
- (27) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.146.
- (28) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.436.
- (29) ^cUnşurī, Dīwān, p.436.
- (30) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.436

- (31) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Ra^cd XIII, 29.
E.W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Vol.I, p.1901.
- (32) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.47.
- (33) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.496.
- (34) See f.n.4.
- (35) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.496.
- (36) Ibid, pp.202-203.
- (37) C.E. Bosworth, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, Cambridge, 1975, pp.170-171.
- (38) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.91.
- (39) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.145.
- (40) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.3.
- (41) Ibid, p.109.
- (42) Ibid, p.111.
- (43) Ibid, p.78.
- (44) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.452.
- (45) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.133.
- (46) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.IV, p.184.
- (47) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.273.
- (48) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.II, p.46.
- (49) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Insān LXXVI, 18.
E.W. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Vol.I, p.1405.
- (50) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.181.
- (51) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.181.
- (52) Ibid, p.781.
- (53) Ibid, p.818.
- (54) Abū al-^cAtāhiya, Dīwān, (ed. Shukrī Faysal), Damascus, 1964, p.566.
- (55) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.294.

- (56) Abdulla el-Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry, The Ode (Qasida)", Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, Cambridge, 1983, p.55, where reference is made to al-Jahiz's interesting observation apropos the above verse that the hunted animal, when its description is incorporated into the theme of praise, tends to escape, whilst in elegies, in keeping with the mood, it is hunted successfully.
- (57) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.165.
- (58) Qur'ān, Surat al-Ra^Cd XIII, 29.
- (59) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.120.
- (60) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.439.
- (61) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.918.
- (62) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.131.
- (63) Ibid, p.393.
- (64) Ibid, p.50.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POETS' TREATMENT OF THE PROPHETIC

MATERIAL IN THE QUR'ĀN

(1) MOSES

As before, we may begin with a detailed statistical table, which differs from the previous one only in its order of presentation, the nature of the following discussion suggesting that it would be more helpful to organize the topics not in descending order of frequency but according to the logic of the Qur'anic narrative.

Key: U = ^CUnṣurī / AA = Abū al-^CAtāhiya
F = Farrukhī / N = Abū Nuwās / MA = Manūchehrī
B = al-Buḥturī / R = Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī
T = Abū Tāmmām / AV = Anvarī / MU = al-Mutanabbī

Moses	U	AA	F	N	MA	B	R	T	AV	MU
Moses & <u>ṭur</u> mountain	1	-	3	1	2	-	3	1	7	1
Moses palm	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	7	-
Moses staff	2	-	2	2	2	-	6	-	20	-
Moses, the Pharaoh & crossing the sea	2	-	5	-	7	-	-	2	7	1
Moses and his brother Aaron	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Moses, the calf & <u>al-samirī</u>	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1	-
Reference to Moses	1	-	1	2	1	-	-	2	1	1
	9	-	12	5	14	-	10	7	53	3

The main focus of the chapter covering paradisaical terms lay with the poets' use of this material to formulate comparisons, in particular to extend the range of references for the patron or the beloved, and the scale of perfection on which they may be placed. The three thematic areas of madīh, ṭabī^ca and ghazal provided the context for these references. There, the allusions were, for the most part, designed to elevate the position and standing of the patron by either enhancing his physical features or by emphasizing his moral worth. The poets similarly seek to highlight their masters' qualities with the prophetic material, placing them on the level commanded by God or, indeed, even on a higher one. They achieve this objective by drawing on the experiences of the prophet in question in order to enlarge the range of references in terms of which the patron's standing, authority and power are articulated. The prophetic material appears overwhelmingly in the context of madīh and therefore the areas of ṭabī^ca and ghazal previously examined will not require consideration here. In some cases, one can see that references to

prophets are thematically linked to other illustrations of the relevant qualities in surrounding lines while, in others, the poet seems rather to juxtapose various qualities in a random fashion including, for example, a reference to wisdom and power, as embodied in Moses, next to a line on generosity. But even where there exist thematic similarities in the surrounding material, the connections can hardly be considered organic since there is no narrative unity. The context in which such references appear is thus ultimately of little or no significance, and they may be therefore justifiably examined in isolation.

The poets' treatment of the Qur'anic narrative of Moses

We shall deal first with references to Moses because, taken together, the various incidents in which he figures are by far the most frequently quoted, as shown in the enclosed table. As in the Qur'ān, the material relating to Moses is never formed into a consecutive narrative but, rather, attention is paid to the various events in which he figures separately: each has a different function and meaning and may therefore be considered individually. To be excluded from consideration are those references which are not tied to any of the specific events narrated in the Qur'ān, but simply used the name Moses as an effectively abstract term of comparison embodying the virtue of the patron. The many instances of this type of usage may be exemplified by reference to Anvarī:

سخره دست و آستین تو باد (1)

مشکلی کان کلیم حل نکند

'Let the (solution to the) problem which the
Kalīm (Moses) cannot solve
Be a toy in your hands and up your sleeves.'

Here we can detect no specific reference to one particular event constituting the narrative of Moses, thus exempting this example, and others like it, from our discussion. Although, inevitably, some of the events feature more prominently than others, the most significant, God's call to Moses, is fortuitously the first in a temporal sequence, and we may organize the discussion of the various topics accordingly:

a) God's call to Moses to come face to face with Mount Ṭūr (Sinai)

b) God's commandment to Moses to place his hand in his pocket and, upon withdrawal, discovering it to be radiant white.

c) The miraculous power of Moses' staff.

d) Pharaoh's pursual of Moses to the Red Sea and the parting of the waters to allow Moses to cross.

a) God's call to Moses to come face to face with Mount Tūr

The relevant Qur'anic passage is:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِي أَنظُرْ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنُ
تَرٰنِي وَلٰكِنِ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرٰنِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا
(2) وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

An example of the first phrase in the narrative to be used by the poets is provided by Farrukhī:

اگر بخل خواهد که روی تو بیند بگوش آید او را ز تو «لن ترانی»
(3)

'If miserliness wants to see your face, its
ear will hear you say "You will never see
me".'

When we compare this with the Qur'anic text we can see how he relies heavily on two key clauses pertaining to Moses' plea and God's reply, completely changing their meaning with the insertion of the word "miserliness". In this manner, the generosity of the patron assumes a greater importance because it is subtly linked with the transcendent quality of God, positing the impossibility of the patron ever behaving in a miserly way, just as it is impossible for Moses to come face to face with God.

Farrukhī's second example again deals with the theme of the patron's generosity:

ازو بخانه خود بود باز گشتن من چو بازگشتن موسی بخانه از که طور
(4)

'My return homewards from him (patron) was like Moses' return from Mount Tūr.'

In the Qur'anic narrative, Moses is seen returning from the mountain in an elated mood, enlightened by his religious experience with God. The poet associates the feeling conveyed by that experience with his return homewards from his patron's palace where he, too, felt overjoyed at having spent time in the presence of an enlightened and generous master. Farrukhī here, instead of using complicated metaphor to illustrate the beneficent qualities of his patron, as in the first example, chooses to eulogise the master by use of an extended simile. Here one can notice the elegant structure of the simile whereby the elements in the second hemistich appear in reverse order to those in the first.

Another interesting example which deals with the same subject and has the same aim in mind is proffered by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, namely:

دیدار خواست چشم زمانه ز قدر تو در گوش او نهاد قضا لن ترانیا
(5)

'The eye of time desired to glance at your exalted rank, but in its fear Fate said, "You will never see me".'

Here, it can be noticed that Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī uses

this Qur'anic term to express the wish for his patron to enjoy a lengthy rule, described hyperbolically as eternal. Both Farrukhī and Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī use the Qur'anic source to provide the context and support the idea they want to illustrate, but the selected relationship governing the words Farrukhī uses in his verse, i.e. terms like "miserliness" asking to see the face of his patron, and the Qur'anic term "you will never see me" constitute elements which are simply juxtaposed whereas Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's combination exhibits greater elaboration of metaphor leading to an integration of poetic and rhetoric elements. It is reasonable to assume that Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī had access to Farrukhī's work and referred to it; but his verse displays greater command of language and shows a greater disposition to develop style at the expense of content than was the case during Farrukhī's era.

The status of the patron once again forms the theme of Anvarī's treatment of this subject, with the poet here drawing on the science of astronomy as well as the Qur'anic narrative for his imagery:

مشتري را از شرف دولت سراي طالعش چون کليم الله را خلوت سراي طور باد (6)

'May the house of his star, out of honour be
in the planet Jupiter, in the same way as the
house of Moses was in Tūr.'

In the first hemistich, the poet creates an image derived from astronomy and compares it with the imagery of the second hemistich which is almost entirely based on the Qur'anic narrative. The poet in this verse raises the patron's standing to equal that of Moses. Technically, the line consists of an optative clause in the first hemistich, followed by a simile in the second through which the desired elevation of the patron's fortunes is brought into conjunction with Moses' presence on Mount Ṭūr, lending great significance thereby to his patron's standing.

The use of Moses as a term of comparison for the patron may be found, if rarely, in earlier Arabic poetry. Abū Nuwās, for example, uses the same Qur'anic narrative in order to eulogize his patron:

مرحباً يا سمي من كلّم الله — وأدنى مكانه تقريباً (7)

'Welcome, you who have the same name as
the one who spoke to God,
(yet) Your position is closer to God than
his.'

Here, the poet takes advantage of his patron's name (Mūsā), first to identify him with the Qur'anic Moses, and then to suggest that his status is even more exalted. Abu Nuwas thus resembles the Persian poets in the hyperbolic treatment of building up the patron's status, but differs from them technically, there being nothing in this line to

foreshadow the complex imagery and rhetorical devices elaborated by the Persian poets.

From this point, the Qur'anic narrative progresses to the stage where God's presence is revealed in the illumination of Mount Tūr, providing further material from which can be fashioned similar images used to emphasize the patron's glory. ^cUnṣurī, in the following example, describes the celebration of the Feast of Sada in honour of his patron. This is a popular tradition going back to the time of Hoshang, approximately 860 B.C., when the lighting of a number of fires constituted a central element of the festival. For the poet, the accumulative effect created by the resulting conflagration was one of vast illumination of the area such as to compare with the illumination of Mount Tūr:

سده جشن ملوک نامدارست	ز افریدون واز جم یادگارست
زمین گویی توامشب کوه طورست	کزو نور تجلی آشکارست
گر این روزست شب خواندش نباید	و کربش روز شد خوش روزگارست

(9)

'Sada is a feast of famous kings, recalling the times of Afrīdūn and Jamshīd. You would say that the earth tonight (on which you rule) is Mount Tūr. From it the manifestation (of God's presence) is visible. If the day should not be called night, and if the night becomes day, too, how splendid time is!'

In the Qur'anic narrative, the illumination of Mount Tūr

is conveyed by the single reflexive verbal noun tajallā which, in 'Unṣurī's verse, is reinforced by the qualifying noun nūr. Here, the poet creates a metaphor in the first hemistich which leads to and from which emerges the principal metaphor.

Farrukhī, in his treatment of this incident, seeks to establish a relationship between the patron (and his audience) and God, using Moses as an intermediary link figure:

چهار حد بساط از فروغ طلعت او ز نور طور تولى شناختن نتوان

(10)

'You cannot distinguish the four quarters of the globe because of his countenance just as (Moses) could not see (God) when He revealed His light.'

Just as Moses could not bear to see God's radiance as manifested on Mount Ṭūr, so the patron's audience are blinded to the whole world. The poet not only succeeds in transposing the quality of divine radiance from God to his patron, but invests him also with powers of illumination extending far beyond that possessed by God, since he illumines not just one locality but the four quarters of the globe. Once again, in this example, the figure of Moses is used as a (rhetorical) stepping stone: a means by which a patron can be compared to God and where Moses

assumes the role of reader/subject.

We notice, as the Qur'anic narrative progresses from the illumination of Mount Tūr to its collapse, that the mood conveyed by the imagery changes from one evoking a positive air designed to uplift the spirit to one which gives rise to a forbidding or threatening atmosphere evoking power and sadness. We propose now to discuss two verses, one which conflicts with that mood, and the other which faithfully reflects it. Anvarī, in the line below, combines two images, one based on the Qur'anic narrative, the other composed by himself, in order to posit a comparison by which his patron may be favourably paired with God:

دل حاسد از باد عکس سنانت چنانست چون طور کاه تجلی

(11)

'The heart of the envious person (collapses)
because of the reflection caused by the speed
of your spear,
Like the (collapse) of Tūr when (God) revealed
himself.'

The poet, by alluding to the reflection of the patron's spear which causes the envious heart to collapse or flutter, evokes an image of latent power which is cleverly associated with the patron, in the same way as the collapse of the mountain evokes the real power of God.

In al-Mutanabbī's verse, one can see that the mood conveyed by the imagery is one of sadness reflecting a sombre occasion. Indeed, what the poet does here is to provide, on the one hand, a comparison (in terms of mood) linking the death of his patron lamented by the poet with the collapse of the mountain, which deeply affects Moses; both incidents provide a cause for mourning or bewilderment. On the other, he establishes a parallel clause in terms of which his patron is effectively made equivalent to God, through the manipulation of two images, one drawn from the Qur'anic narrative, the other of his own invention. Thus, al-Mutanabbī subtly draws attention to the loss of his patron and the extent to which this has an effect on his followers by comparing it with the experience undergone by Moses during the collapse of Ṭūr when he fell down senseless in a state of shock:

خرجوا به وليكل بال خلفه صعقات موسى يوم ذك الطور

(12)

'They bore him out, and every one of them following him cried, devastated like Moses when Ṭūr crashed down.'

By connecting, then, the state or reaction of the mourners weeping for their dead patron with the reaction of Moses to the collapse of the mountain, the poet seeks to make a comparison between the causes of the reactions, and

implies that the patron, in death, commands equal if not more attention than the collapse of the mountain (at the bidding of God).

- b) God's commandment to Moses to place his hand in his pocket and, upon withdrawal, discovering it to be radiant white

We pass from the sombre mood set by the poetry of al-Mutanabbī in his treatment of Moses' reaction as Mount Tur collapses to a stage in the narrative which recalls the moods of brilliance and enchantment evoked through the manifestation of the miraculous qualities invested respectively in the palm (of his hand) and staff of Moses. We may begin with a group of verses in which the common element is a reference to the whiteness of Moses' hand, which, in ^CUnṣurī's case, is contained in his description of his patron's house and garden, within the context of madīḥ:

وگر بخانه کافوری اندرون نگری
زمان مشرق بینی در ابتدای نهار
چو کف موسی گایت همی نموداز جیب
چنانکه روی بهشتی بود بروز شمار
(13)

'If you look inside his white house, you will see the sunrise at the beginning of the day Like Moses' palm which came out from the pocket as a miracle, like the face of the people of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.'

The first line establishes the scenario, namely the

patron's house with its interior assuming a radiant aspect evoked by a sunrise; then, in the second line, this image is expanded and given a divine quality when compared with the miracle of Moses' palm. The sum of these images is further strengthened by the reference to the Qur'anic theme of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection. It will be noted that once the scenario is established in the image of the poet's own making, he then closely adheres to the text of the Qur'anic narrative in the second line, providing a composite image which extends the scenario in a way highly complimentary to the patron.

Manūchehrī, for his part, combines the story of Moses' palm with three other references from the prophetic domain into a compact sequence which occurs not in the expected context of *madīh* but in that of the description of Nature. The passage in question is a particularly complex one in which the poet displays, in a single line, four natural phenomena and then, in the following line, relates each of these to a Qur'anic theme:

کنار آبدان گشته به شاخ ارغوان حامل
 سحاب ساجگون گشته به طفل عاجگون حبلی
 یکی چون دینه یعقوب و دیگر چون درخ یوسف
 سدیگر چون دل فرعون ، چهارم چون کف موسی (14)

'The bank of the pool has conceived the Arghwan tree, and the teak tree (in hue) like a cloud has conceived an ivory child.

The first like Jacob's eye, the second like Joseph's cheek, the third like Pharaoh's heart, the fourth like Moses' palm.'

The connections made between the four images of Nature and the four Qur'anic narratives may be understood as follows:

A) The bank of the pool: the reference here is to the failure of Jacob's eyesight and his long-lasting weeping for his son which is mentioned in sūrat Yūsuf, 84:

﴿٨٤﴾ وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَأَبْصَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

Therefore, the relationship obtaining between the bank of the pool and Jacob's eye is established through the condition of wetness.

B) The Arghwan tree boughs and Joseph's cheek: the reference here is to sūrat Yūsuf, 31:

﴿٣١﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَكِنًا وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّينًا وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا

The relationship here is much more straightforward, the common term between them being the colour red.

C) The cloud and Pharaoh's heart: the reference to Pharaoh in sūrat al-Aʿrāf, 124:

﴿١٢٤﴾ لَا قَطْعَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ ثُمَّ لَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

clearly shows the essential evil of his nature, the colour black therefore being the common term between him and the cloud.

D) The ivory child and Moses' palm: the reference here is to sūrat al-Shu^carā',33 and sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ,32:

﴿٣٣﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

﴿٣٢﴾ أَسْلَكَ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ وَأَضْمَمُ إِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنْ

and the common element is the colour white. Manūchehrī here was not concerned with expanding the details of the Qur'anic narrative but, rather, with compression and parallelism within the complex but taut rhetorical structure of the figure known as laff wa nashr⁽¹⁵⁾ (jam^c wa taqsīm).

Manūchehrī uses the same Qur'anic narrative of Moses' palm in quite another context where it occurs as a term of comparison for wine:

پس آنکامی برون آور ز خمّم چو کف دست موسی در 'که طور

(16)

'After that, take me out from the jar,
like Moses' palm before Mount Tūr.'

Here, the poet likens the sparkling clearness of the

wine to the radiant whiteness of Moses' palm, but the line may also be interpreted as referring to the miracle of transformation and the process of fermentation. In both instances, the primary signification of the whiteness (= sparkling, clearness, lightness) of Moses' palm is evident.

Although specifically Qur'anic references are absent from ^CAbbasid wine poetry, the general theme of sparkling, clearness, lightness, is quite common and could have served partly as a model for Manūchehrī. His use in this basic meaning in relation to wine may be seen as an extension of the imagery of light in Arabic poetry as used, for example, by Abū Nuwās:

قال « ابغري المصباح » قلت له اتقند
حسي وحسبك ضوءها مصباحا
(17)

صِرْفًا كَانَ شِعْأَهَا فِي كَفِّ شَارِبِهَا قَبَسٌ (18)

فَلَوْ مَزَجْتَ بِهَا نُورًا لَمَازَجَهَا
حَتَّى تَوَلَّدُ أَنْوَارٌ وَأَضْوَاءُ (19)

What is noteworthy, therefore, in Manūchehrī lies not in the particular way the different elements are interpreted, but in the very fact that they are combined.

A further allusion to Moses' palm occurs in a poem by Anvarī, the noted rhetorician. Here we revert to the theme of madīh but move from the static domestic radiance of ^cUnsuri to praise of the active intervention of an official in administration important enough to help his people and solve their problems. Radiance here, intriguingly, is associated with the normally prosaic bureaucratic pen:

نوك قلم ترا يیابی خاکِ قدم ترا دمادم
اعجازِ کف کلیمِ عمران آثارِ دمِ مسیحِ مریم (20)

'The nib of your pen as it moves, and the
dust on your feet as you walk
Are the miracle of the palm of Kalīm, the son
of Imran, and the works of the breath of
Jesus, the son of Mary.'

Here, the patron is praised for the good use to which his power is put, and the poet hyperbolically emphasizes this quality by ascribing miraculous effects to the two contrasting aspects of his activity, such power being underlined precisely by their association (again, totally organized in a symmetrical jam^c wa taqsīm structure) with two prophetic figures renowned particularly for their good works.

In the following verse, Anvarī demonstrates an even greater command of technical artifice:

چکند رمح دروهمچو عصائبانی

(21)

دستشان گرید بیضای کلیم الله نیست

'If his hand is not the white hand of
Kalīm Allāh,
How is it that he wields a spear as
(miraculously as the) staff (transformed
into) serpent.'

In the first hemistich, the poet uses the conditional sentence structure, the rhetorical negative clause inferring a positive conclusion to heighten the poetic effect while, in the second hemistich, the rhetorical interrogative is followed by the simile as implied assertion. The elements progressively shorten in a stretto culminating in the final two word juxtaposition that encapsulates, in the compact energy of its immediate and miraculous transformation, the patron's ability to perform warlike duties in a heroic and quasi-divine manner.

To some extent, this last example by Anvarī may serve also as an introduction to our next section dealing with the events in which the story of the staff of Moses finds expression.

c) The miraculous power of Moses' staff.

We begin with a verse by Abū Nuwās which affords an interesting comparison with Anvarī as to their respective styles for, while the Persian poet displays a mastery of rhetorical technicalities, Abū Nuwās's treatment of this material in Arabic reflects a style which is terse,

epigrammatic and lacking any ornate figures of speech:

فَإِنْ بِكَ فَيْكُمْ إِنْكَ فِرْعَوْنَ بَاقِيًا ، فَإِنْ عَصَا مُوسَى بِكَفٍ خَصِيبٍ
رَمَاكُمْ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِحَيَّةٍ ، أَكُولٍ لِحَيَاتِ الْبِلَادِ شَرُوبٍ
(22)

'If the injustice of Pharaoh continues to abide within you, (know that) Moses' staff is in Khaṣīb's hand: (for the Amīr al-Mu'minīn has inflicted on you a serpent (so terrible that) it consumes and swallows up all throughout the land.'

The objective of the poem is to instil into potential enemies a sublime fear of his patron by investing him with the capability, through his staff, to perform miraculous deeds of the same order as those of Moses. But the means by which Abū Nuwās achieves this objective suggests that his patron occupies a position equal to that of God, his staff, by changing into an invincible serpent, symbolizing and representing an extension of his power over which he exercises direct control. Moses, however, represents but a vehicle through which God expresses his divine commands and messages.

This elaboration on the Qur'anic theme of Moses and his staff is given further treatment by Manūchehrī in which he describes the confrontation between Moses and the Pharaoh, using this as a basis to compare his patron, Sulṭān Mas^cūd, with the prophet, and his opponents with the Pharaoh:

گر همی فرعون قوم سحره پیش آرد رسن و رشته جنبیده بهمار انکار د
 بالله و بالله و بالله که غلط پندارد مار موسی همه سحر و سحره او بارد
 میر موسی است که شمشیر چون عبان دارد
 دست ابلیس و جنودش کند از ما کوتاه

(23)

'Were the Pharaoh to bring forth the sorcerer-folk and change the ropes and shake strings into serpents,
 By God, by God, by God! What a mistaken idea this would be!, for Moses' serpents devour all sorcery and sorcerers.
 The Amīr is Moses and his sword serpent-like shall lop off the hands of Iblis and his troops.'

One can see here that Manūchehrī somewhat extends the idea expressed in the Qur'anic text to illustrate his point, and goes further than Abū Nuwās by enhancing the power of the patron's enemies who are now equated with Iblis and his followers and, likewise, projects an equivalent increase in the estimation of a patron who can crush such foes. The political connotations underlying these lines become clearer when we learn that Sultan Mas^cūd, the patron in question, was experiencing a crisis of rule where his authority was seriously undermined by his enemies.⁽²⁴⁾ Thus, the poet arguing his patron's case from a position of weakness, uses the Qur'anic narrative as a basis for a moral appeal aimed at his potential supporters by emphasizing his standing as defender of the faith, and as the upholder of Good against Evil. Both Abū Nuwās and Manūchehrī have the same objective in mind: to forewarn

potential enemies of their respective patrons with a view to avoiding conflict, and both use the conditional sentence structure in order to press home their respective threats; but, whereas Abū Nuwās dwells on this theme without progressing beyond, Manūchehrī develops his message into a moral appeal through his skilful use of rhetoric. Manuchehri, in composing the above lines, could have had Abu Nuwas's example in mind, particularly given the common formulation of a threat to the patron's enemy, but the natural equivalence of the Caliph/King and Moses on the one hand, and Pharaoh's magicians and the patron's enemies on the other, makes it equally logical to conclude that the Persian could have been working independently here.

^cUnşurī, in his treatment of the same theme, uses two central images taken from the Qur'anic narrative as a basis for his verses around which he weaves a narrative of his own through cross comparison to create telling, succinct imagery:

خیال و شعبده جادوان فرعون است
 توگفتی آن سپهری بود بی کرانه و مر
 عصای موسی تیغ ملک برابرشان
 چو اژدها شده و باز کرده پهن زفر (25)

'As if to say that their army's capability was limitless like the imagination and sorcery of the Pharaoh's magicians.

(However) The sword of the king like the staff of Moses became a serpent which opened its

بجای وهم یکی تیر دیده در دل خویش

بجای دیده یکی نیزه دیده در محجر

mouth tenfold.

And in place of their self-delusion they now
saw an arrow, in their heart and in place of
their eyes they saw a spear.'

The poet, then, likens the Pharaoh's sorcerers to his patron's enemies who arrogate to themselves a power which proves delusory when invoked against the patron, just as the Pharaoh's sorcery - born out of arrogance - proved equally worthless against the divine power invested in the staff of Moses which, to complete the cross comparison, is likened to the sword of the patron. Thus, the image of the serpent in ^CUnṣurī's verse takes on a forbidding aspect absent in the Qur'anic narrative. Jaws extended, it confronts and completely demoralizes the opposition by appearance alone, transforming the enemy's arrogance into a state of delusion and blindness from which recovery is unlikely.

The theme of Moses' staff is given a more specific, intense treatment by Anvarī who likens it to the patron's spear which is portrayed as a deadly weapon conspicuous in its appearance as well as by performance, a natural extension to a related mythological beast:

ازدهای رمح تو خلقی بیک دم در کشد وانگهی فربه نگردد اینت معجز لاغری

عقل بارمح تو فتوی می دهد اکنون که چوب شاید ارثعبان شود بی معجز پیغمبری

(26)

'Your dragon spear devours a group of people
in a second without swelling up, a miracle of
slenderness.

The mind asks the spear for an explanation:
how can a staff become a serpent without a
prophetic miracle.'

The first verse confirms the patron's unique ability to dispatch his enemies, consuming, digesting and disposing of them without any visible external signs of effort, encapsulated in an exquisitely wrought metaphor. The second verse progresses to the point where a (rhetorical) question is posed, the answer to which has already been supplied in the affirmative in the first verse, the implication being that the patron's ability to conquer his enemies is equal in power to the miracle performed by God with the staff of Moses. This is a feat which confounds the patron's most ardent supporters, just as his power in the first verse manifested itself through his spear to overwhelm his enemies.

Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, for his part, deals with the staff theme concentrating on the movement generated in the poem. His images convey, for example, the metaphorical force of the patron's arrow (Sulṭān Ibrāhīm) in flight that, on a metaphysical level, has the capacity to change day into night, thereby offering up a challenge to the power of their creator, and in a mundane sense displays the deadly accuracy of the patron in piercing the eye of the enemy:

چنانکه نوکِ قلم در شتابِ حلقهٔ میم
چنانکه جادوی جادوان عصای کلیم
(27)

سیه کند بگشاد خدنگ دیدهٔ روز
فرو خورد حشراتِ زمانه نیزه او

'Once fired, his arrow blots out day's eye
swifter than pen can dot an i.
His spear is like Moses staff casting a
magician's spell.'

The initial image of velocity is not only maintained throughout the first line but is by implication carried over into the second, in a continuity of movement at once both subtle and purposeful. Like the arrow and the pen, the spear is ruthless and efficient in despatching all that lies in his path, in allowing the great army amassed and ready for confrontation with the patron and his forces to be metaphorically reduced to the level of insects. And, like the arrow and the pen, the spear constitutes an instrument galvanized into action through the power of the patron, in the same way that God took possession of the staff of Moses and changed it into a serpent.

The patron's powerful personality and character in another of Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's verse is seen to express itself in a passive rather than an active manner but, for all that, the impression of energy generated in his lines, rich in hyperbole, is no less impressive since the poet is successful in attributing to the patron the ability to galvanize everything he touches by stirring it into life, changing its form or imbuing it with a miraculous quality:

گردها کز نعل مرکبش خیزد	مایه کحل و نوتیا باشد
هر عصائی نه اژدها گردد	هر گیاهی نه کیمیا باشد (28)

'The dust stirred up by the shoe of his horse is the origin for antimony and zinc powder. (For) Not every staff becomes a serpent and not every species of grass becomes a chemical ingredient.'

The previous verse, as we have seen, described the patron's every action as initiated by, and proceeding from, himself, leading to a telling and miraculous conclusion. This created vigorous movement and a tremendous energy which characterizes the patron. In this verse, the patron assumes a God-like presence whereby the depth of his personality is conveyed or transmitted to and through every object, in turn becoming a conduit for the expression of his beneficent power; dust, for example, stirred up by the shoe of the horse on which he is riding becomes a healing agent. Thus, the reference to the curative power of kuhl and tutyā invoked in this verse forms an integral part of the central metaphor, in which the patron's ability to transform objects into some other form becomes apparent. And, by inserting the line alluding to the Qur'anic story of Moses who, too, possessed, through God's divine intervention, this ability to transform his staff into a serpent, the poet seeks to reinforce the God-like persona

of his patron.

Farrukhī's treatment of the same theme, by contrast, is somewhat simpler, as befits the age in which he practised as a court poet. In this particular verse, he seeks to praise the Sultan's secretary, a certain Abū Sahl °Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad, emphasizing in particular his writing skills:

نه مسيحست وليكن نفسش باد مسيح نه كليمت وليكن قلمش چوبِ كليم
(29)

'He is not Jesus but his breath is the
breath of Jesus,
He is not the Kalīm (Moses), but his pen
is the staff of Moses.'

The first hemistich praises effectively his capacity to transform situations positively since, although he is denied identity with Jesus himself, the denial only serves to underline the quality he holds in common with this prophet who, according to the Qur'anic narrative, created and brought to life a bird by breathing on a lump of clay. Having established the patron's standing in this respect, the poet proceeds to invest his pen with miraculous qualities that are associated with the staff of Moses. The complete verse, then, is a metaphor for the beneficent creativity of his patron.

Continuing on the same theme, we return once again to a Persian poet well versed in the art of rhetoric that dominated the standard poetic discourse of the age, there being indeed no better exponent of this art than the poet in question, Anvarī, who deals with a similar theme to that covered by Farrukhī, namely the creativity of the patron, expressed in the same thematic context in which the image of Moses and his staff once again features prominently:

آنکه در معرکه سحر بیان قلمش همچو عصا ثعبانست

(30)

'His pen is like the staff (of Moses), a serpent in the battle of magical, curative writing.'

The poet here, in an elaborate metaphor, attempts to show how effective a writer his patron is by depicting his pen as a weapon with which to mesmerize and isolate his opponents, by capturing and then commanding the attention and the imagination of the greater public through his writing talent. The power to produce a desired result with his pen, therefore, is as dramatic and effective as the staff of Moses which changed into a serpent to confront and dispose of God's enemies.

As with most court poets, Anvarī could turn his talents to the art of satire with devastating effect, using it as a rhetorical weapon with which to undermine the reputation of

a rival or the position of an enemy. In the following verse, Anvarī invests his patron with this ability:

ملا مت نفست می برد دعای مسیح غرامت قلمت می کشد عصای کلیم
مسیر کلاک تو در معرض تعرض خصم مثال جرم شهابست و رجم دیو رجم
(31)

'The supplication of Jesus cannot prevent your vilification (of someone) and (the power) of Moses's staff cannot ward off your pen's harmful effect.
For the efficacy of your pen during confrontation with the enemy is like a shooting star recalling the casting out of Satan.'

It will be noted that Anvarī emphasizes his patron's skill in the art of satire in the first verse by contrasting the power of his pen with that wielded by divine and powerful elements taken from the Qur'anic narrative, unable to restrain the sheer verve and the biting acidity which drips from its nib. Once it is realized that these divine elements are incapable of nullifying its effect, then the patron's skill in satire becomes doubly reinforced.

On this firm foundation, Anvarī, relying on simile, constructs with his own material a dramatic picture in which the patron's skill as a satirist is heightened when the impact produced by his pen is likened to a shooting

star. This latter image, taken from the Qur'an, immediately evokes the episode of the casting out of Satan, adding a moral dimension to the verse, since the patron is presented as a defender of the faith crusading against evil. Essentially, however, the message conveyed here is that the patron, by virtue of his skill as a satirist, is presented as a figure occupying a position of invincibility.

d) Pharaoh's pursual of Moses to the Red Sea and the parting of the waters to allow Moses to cross.

This section deals with the event which describes the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses where it will become apparent that some poets, Farrukhī in particular, draw heavily on the imagery of the Qur'anic narrative in their treatment of this incident.

By comparing the original tale with the poets' treatment of the incident, we can see to what extent each poet is reliant on and therefore limited by its imagery in what they have to say.

The Qur'anic narrative (sūrat al-Shu^carā', 63, 65, 66,
sūrat Tahah, 77 and sūrat Yūnus, 90) is as follows:

﴿٦٣﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ أَضْرِبَ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ
وَأَرْزَلْنَا نَمَّ الْأَخْرَيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَأَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا
الْأَخْرَيْنَ. ﴿٧٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِي

الْبَحْرِ يَيْساً لَا تَخَافُ دَرَكاً وَلَا تَخْشَى . ﴿٩٠﴾ وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ
فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُودُهُ بَغْياً وَعَدُوّاً حَتَّى إِذَا أَذْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ أَمُنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بُنُوءَ

Here, reference is made to Moses parting the sea by smiting it with his staff, to the drowning of Pharaoh and his people, and finally to the rescue of the people of Israel, constituting incidents which find mention in all the poetry under discussion.

^CUnşurî, in his treatment of this subject matter, relies heavily for his imagery on the Qur'anic narrative, describing his patron thus:

بر آب درهمه غرقه شدند چون فرعون
چو برگذشت از آن آب شاه موسی وار (32)

'Everyone drowned like Pharaoh when the King
(like Moses) passed over that water.'

Using an extended simile, the poet likens his patron here to Moses by drawing a comparison between the manner in which the patron (successfully) leads his army into battle with the way Moses, invested with divine power, disposes of Pharaoh and his followers. ^CUnşurî, in his official capacity as poet laureate to the Persian court (which post involved also time consuming administrative chores) here produces what can at best be called a routine reworking of the Qur'anic narrative. It reflects the terse, epigrammatic style of the earlier Arab (^CAbbasid) poets

rather than the florid, rhetorical style of later Persian poets like Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī and Anvarī.

Farrukhī treats the same incident in several madīh poems in which he shows more willingness to deviate from the spirit of the Qur'anic narrative, at least partially from its imagery. For example, the first verse cited below praises the power wielded by the patron's army, and transposes the location of the action from the sea to the River Nile where their experiences echo those undergone by the people of Israel:

چو قوم موسی عمران ز رود نیل، از آب بر آمدند همه بی گزند و بی آزار

(33)

'Just as the people of Moses (Ibn ^cImrān) emerged (safely) from the River Nile
They (the patron's army) emerged without injury or hurt.'

What is implied here by use of extended simile is that just as Moses and the people of Israel emerged unscathed from their confrontation with Pharaoh whilst under the protection of God, so the patron's army emerges unscathed under the protection of their master. In the second of Farrukhī's verses covering the same theme, the patron this time is openly praised with a direct comparison being made between him and Moses:

برابر یکی از معجزات موسی بود در آب دریا لشکر کشیدن شه راد (34)

'The manner in which the king leads his army
in the sea was equivalent to one of Moses'
miracles.'

portraying the patron as an outstanding leader blessed with
the qualities of wisdom, valour, insight and patience.

Manūchehrī, drawing on the same episode, shows more
innovation than ^CUnṣurī or Farrukhī. He introduces into
the narrative images or expressions of his own invention
which he uses to extend and expand on the original meaning
of the Qur'anic material rather than attempting to
manipulate or transform a particular clause taken from the
narrative, in order to compare it with an image of his own
making, as was the case in ^CUnṣurī's and Farrukhī's
treatment of the same theme. Manūchehri uses the basic
storyline provided by the Qur'anic narrative and around
this thread he weaves a story:

قوم فرعون همه را در بن دریا راند آنکهی غرقه کنندشان و بیگون کرداند
گر بترسندی و فرعون خدا را خواند جبرئیل آید و خاکش بدهن افشاند
و ندر آن دریاوان آب و وحل درماند
(35) که برون آمد از آنجا ، نتواند به شناه

'He drives all the Pharaoh's people to the
bottom of the sea, and then drowns them and
turns them upside down,
Were the Pharaoh to become afraid (and) call
upon God, Gabriel would come and cast dust

into his mouth.

There he will remain in the sea, water and mire, for he will be unable to swim free.'

These are phrases which have a threatening feel to them; indeed, what we are reading here is a eulogy of the patron . defending his people by securing the downfall of the enemy, in the way that God secured the defeat of Pharaoh.

Such extended development of the theme stands in sharp contrast to al-Mutanabbī's treatment which adheres closely to the Qur'anic narrative, evident in the below verse:

أَوْ كَانَ لُجُ الْبَحْرِ مِثْلَ يَمِينِهِ مَا انشَقَّ حَتَّى جَاَزَ فِيهِ مُوسَى
(36)'

'If the deep sea were like his right hand
It would not have parted and let Moses
cross.'

Here, an improbability is posited against a certainty (grammatically expressed through a conditional sentence), namely that the sea of Moses would not have divided had it resembled the power (of the generosity) of the patron's hand, which has no compeer. Thus, if the staff of Moses, which he used to smite the sea in order to part it in two, was invested with divine power, then think how much power the patron's hand (of generosity) wields.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- (1) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.117.
- (2) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-A^Crāf VII, 143.
Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ XXVIII, 29-30.
- (3) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.370.
- (4) Ibid, p.197.
- (5) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.8.
- (6) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.100.
- (7) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.731.
- (8) F. Steingass, Farhang-i Steingass (A Persian-English Dictionary), 6th ed., London, 1977, p.663.
- (9) ^CUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.14.
- (10) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.315.
- (11) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.489.
- (12) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.137.
- (13) ^CUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.94.
- (14) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.133.
- (15) J. Wansbrough, "Arabic Rhetoric and Qur'anic Exegesis", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol.XXXI, part 3, London, 1968, p.62.
- (16) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.39.
- (17) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.115.
- (18) Ibid, p.462.
- (19) Ibid, p.75.
- (20) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.340.
- (21) Ibid, p.481.
- (22) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.371.

- (23) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.191.

Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Shu^carā XXVI, 38-47

﴿٣٨﴾ فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ لِمِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَقِيلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُجْتَمِعُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّبِعُونَ السَّحَرَةَ إِنَّ كَانُوا هُمُ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَنَا أَجْرٌ إِن كُنَّا نَخُنُّ الْغَالِبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَأَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعَصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَأَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

- (24) Abū 'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b.Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, Tarīkh-i Bayhaqī, (ed. Ghanī and Fayyād), Tehran, 1324 A.H., p.632.

^cAbd al-Na^cīm Muḥammad Ḥasanayn, Dawlat al-Salājīya, Cairo, 1975, pp.29-30.

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khvandmīr, Ḥabīb al-siyar, Vol.II, Bombay, 1273 A.H., p.392.

- (25) ^cUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.127.

Minḥāj al-Dīn Sirāj al-Jawzānī, Tabaqāt-i Nāsirī, Vol.I, Kabul, 1342 A.H., p.234.

See the Introduction of Tarjamat Tarīkh al-Bayhaqī, trans. Yahya al-Khashshāb and Sādiq Nash'at, Cairo, 1956, p.38

- (26) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.466.

- (27) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.107.

- (28) Ibid, pp.45, 46.

- (29) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.247.

- (30) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.247.

- (31) Ibid, p.353.

- (32) ^cUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.63.

- (33) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.63.

- (34) Ibid, p.34.

- (35) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.191.
- (36) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.143.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POETS' TREATMENT OF THE PROPHETIC MATERIAL

IN THE QUR'ĀN

(2) JESUS

In this chapter, we cover those examples based on the prophetical activities and existence of Jesus, to be found principally in the Sura of the Table and the family of the Imrans. (1)

Key: U = ^CUnṣurī / AA = Abū al-^CAtahiya
F = Farrukhī / N = Abū Nuwās / MA = Manūchehrī
B = al-Buḥturī / R = Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī
AV = Anvarī / MU = al-Mutanabbī

Jesus	U	AA	F	N	MA	B	R	T	AV	MU
Conception of Mary	-	-	2	1	7	-	-	-	8	-
His talking in the cradle	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-
Revivication by Jesus of the dead	3	-	5	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
The ascension of Jesus	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	-
Jesus, the Jews and Crucifixion	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	-
Breath of Jesus	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	-	6	-

Jesus supplication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Reference to Jesus	1	-	1	1	3	-	2	5	5	-
Total	5	-	9	2	21	-	9	7	36	5

With this material, the poets seek, as in the preceding chapters, to extend the range of references in terms of which the patron's/sultān's social and political standing is enhanced, emphasizing here his generosity and his sense of justice respectively. The themes of revivification, resurrection, the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth, which describe the prophetic activities of Jesus, all serve as themes providing comparisons which serve to emphasize these virtues.

In this chapter, attention will also be paid to the concept of Islamic Kingship, an important aspect of the present discussion since the *raison d'être* of the majority of the Persian and, to a lesser extent, Arab poetry was the panegyric of the patron/sultān.⁽²⁾ Indeed, there are several examples cited below in which the theme of justice arises that reflect this concept both literally and symbolically.

But a distinction must be made here between the early

^CAbbasid Caliph and his later Persian counterpart as to the exact nature of his caliphal power and authority, subject, as it was, if not in terms of definition, then at least in function to the political circumstances of the day. These circumstances alone prompted, determined and influenced the expositions of the theory of the Caliphate worked out by such jurists as al-Mawardī and al-Ghazzalī.⁽³⁾

The early ^CAbbasid Caliph, served by the five Arab poets under discussion, concerned himself primarily with defending Islam and administering the affairs of a then unified Islamic empire. He was the fountainhead of power who, while delegating his civil authority to his vizir (an office influenced by Persian tradition), his judicial power to the Qadi (judge), and his military function to the Amir, retained executive power over all these offices. His administration enjoyed a relative political stability in comparison with that experienced by the Ghaznavid and Seljuk administrations under which the five Persian poets, whose works form the main body of this thesis, were active. Moreover, at the time of these administrations in the 11th century, the ^CAbbasid Caliph had lost his temporal power, and the government of the empire had, from the centre, completely collapsed in favour of the establishment of a number of autonomous states, each headed by a Sultan.⁽⁴⁾

These political changes found reflection in the

political conventions adhered to by the poets active during the respective eras under discussion, notably in the shift of emphasis in the way the poets chose to eulogise their patrons from the Arab praising his Caliph in an effective but far from servile manner, and as much out of poetic convention as national duty, to that of his Persian counterpart lauding his Sultan, or one of his ministers, as if his and the nation's life depended on it.

Like the Caliph of the earlier ^CAbbasid period, the Sultan acted as the secular arm of Allah in his capacity as God's shadow on Earth, the relationship between Islam and the State being embodied in and defined by the Shari^Ca, the divinely revealed law of Allah. In theory, the Sultan was obliged to rule according to the prescriptions laid down in the Shari^Ca but the difficulties of attempting to maintain order throughout a politically crumbling empire frequently forced the ruler into adopting political expedients in order to maintain order and justice. For al-Ghazzali, this was the crucial point. Justice, in the Sultān's rule, he said, should be expressed as a need to be placed above that of his specific religious duties, for only he who acted with justice was the true Sultan. al-Ghazzali went on to say in his tract on Islamic kingship entitled Naṣiḥat al-Mulūk that "Kingship remains with unbelief but not with tyranny."⁽⁵⁾ Addressing the Seljuk Sultān Muḥammad b. Malikshah (498/1105-511/1118), al-Ghazzālī makes it clear also that he saw no contradiction in the rulers adopting

religious titles as long as they maintained order, considered a necessary political expedient for a critical period in the history of the Islamic Empire.

Thus, the Persian poets active throughout the Ghaznavid and Seljuk periods sought to mirror in the panegyrics of their patrons/sultāns the qualities of wisdom, generosity and justice thought to be their inherent right by virtue of their position as God's shadows on Earth. Furthermore, to the extent that the political aspect of the patron's rule prevailed over that of the religious, the need for the poets to strengthen the patron's authority by appeal to divine sanction through the use of Qur'anic references and allusions to Muḥammad, Jesus, Moses etc. became ever more pressing. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, in his panegyric of his patron, for example, reflects this concern, buttressing the appeal for the maintenance of order with reference to two such figures:

اژدهای زمانه را امرش دم عیسی و خطِ افسون باد (6)

'Let his patron's authority be invested with the breath of Jesus, and the sorcery (of Moses) in order to quell the dragons of the time.'

Thus, the breath of Jesus, a revivifying agent which, in the Qur'anic narrative, transformed a lump of clay into a

living bird, is used here as a metaphor for the reassertion of the patron's authority which is continually renewed as if imbued with the quality of being eternal. As long as the authority of the patron prevails, the tyrants will be continually repelled; thus, justice becomes dependent on the maintenance of authority, echoing a definition of the Sultan's position within the hierarchy of Islamic society that roughly corresponds to that contained in the theory of kingship posited by al-Ghazzālī in his Nasīḥat al-Mulūk.⁽⁷⁾

The breath of Jesus here is used as a device to instil new life into the patron's rule, invest it with a new authority, and impart to it a divine sanction in order to shore up the Sulṭān's temporal power. But it is used also in the lines to be discussed below as an instrument which breathes new life into a region making its soil fertile or, as in the following verse by Farrukhī, as a means by which to emphasize the patron's generosity:

بسزا مرده صد ساله همی زنده کند

این سخامه جز عیسی است همانا نه سخاست (8)

'That person who died one hundred
years ago
You have revived by your generosity,
(A feat) resembling one of the miracles
of Jesus.'

The first impression one gains here is that the ability to resurrect humans from the state of death associated with

the figure of Jesus is being transposed to the patron. However, the allusion in the first hemistich is to surat al-Baqara, 259:

﴿٢٥٩﴾ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ:

"How can Allāh give life to this City, now that it is dead?",
Thereupon Allah caused him to die, and after a hundred years brought him back to life.'

Thus, it transpires that the patron is being likened not only to Jesus with regard to the feat of resurrecting the dead⁽⁹⁾ - as implied by the verb zinde kardan - but to Allāh Himself.

The figure of Jesus here is thus used as a rhetorical foil, the quality of his miracles contrasted with the patron's quality of generosity to the latter's advantage, while the patron is further, by implication, compared to God.

^cUnşurī's treatment of the same theme through his reference to the figure of Jesus leaves no room for the ambiguity apparent in Farrukhī's verse since, in his allusion to the Qur'anic narrative, no other party is implied in the action that could lead to a misinterpretation of the roles taken by the leading players:

توئی که داد تو زنده کند همی مرده

توئی که یاد تو آسان کند همی دشوار (10)

'You are the one whose generosity and justice
revives the dead,
The invocation of your name bestirring a
memory which makes difficult things (in life)
easy.'

The objective of ^cUnṣurī here, by associating his patron with Jesus and the act of revivification, is to emphasize his master's generosity by imparting to it an eternal and superhuman quality. The patron's generosity, its effects, become forever etched as a consequence in the minds of his subjects. Here, then, the act of revivification comes to symbolize the regenerative effect of the patron's generosity intensified through parallelism and given symmetry through internal rhyme, whereas in Farrukhī generosity becomes a synonym for the act of revivification per se, having no lasting effect as such.

Anvarī's method in eulogizing his patron, Diyā' al-Dīn, was to begin by praising the region in which his seat of power is located, namely Khurāsān. Once again, the reference to the breath of Jesus is used as a device to emphasize the moderate climate and the rich soil for which Khurāsān was renowned, and which yielded high agricultural produce:

لاجرم بادت نسیمی یافت چون باد مسیح
لاجرم آبت مزاجی یافت چون آب حیات (11)

'There is no doubt, Oh Earth of
Khurasan
Your wind has been transformed into a
(cool) breeze
Like the breath of Jesus
And your water has found the essence
(temperament) of the water of
Eternal life.'

Many Persian poets resided in Khurasān, a region blessed with outstanding natural beauty, and could not but be influenced by an environment which encouraged them to develop the ^CAbbasid tradition of Nature description.⁽¹²⁾ In the above lines, the wind of Khurāsān is likened to the breath of Jesus, an allusion to the Qur'anic narratives of the family of the Imrans, in which Jesus, through the divine intervention of Allah, breathes onto a lump of clay to transform it into a living bird. His breath is a wind, therefore, which gives rather than destroys life, and invests the region with a fertility to its soil nourished by water carried along by that same breeze likened to the breath of Jesus. This is a homage to a region and a description of a place invested with a divine spirit that cannot but reflect favourably on the patron who rules over it as a gardener looks after and tends his garden. If it is tended with care, to continue the analogy with justice,

then the gardener will reap his rewards, in the same way as the patron will his, in displaying likewise just conduct in his dealings with his people. It is a sentiment best expressed in the analogy of the shepherd and his flock used by al-Ghazzālī and al-Marwadī as a graphically simple example of their respective political theories.

We now pass to an extended passage by Manūchehrī in which the themes of fertilization, insemination/conception and reviv-ification appear in that order. Expressed in the context of description of Nature in which the vine emerges as the central image connecting the figures of Mary and Jesus, Manūchehrī demonstrates his skill in the description of Nature, displaying beautifully observed details interspersed with ingenious comparisons and metaphors. This poem was composed to commemorate the twenty-first day of the autumnal month of Mihr when, traditionally, kings were crowned. The festival was attended by the court, entertained by songstresses and minstrels. A huge banquet was provided in which wine flowed copiously.⁽¹³⁾ Manucehri begins with a description of the celebration of the mihrgān feast followed by a description of the pears, pomegranates etc. and then sets up a dialogue between the vineyard farmer and a vine which has managed to become fertilized prematurely, independent of the vineyard keeper's husbandry:

راست برگوی که در تو شدم عاجز بکدامین ره یرون شده‌ای زین دز

بر هوا رفتی چون عیسی بی معجز

(14) یا چو قارون بزمین ، وین نبود جایز

'Tell me the truth, for I am confused about how you escaped from this castle (garden) Rising in the air (as you did) like Jesus, but without (his) miracle, and then you (having returned) sank into the Earth like Qarūn, an impossible act (if I may say so).'

The process of fertilization, the rising of the seed seeking pollination, is likened to the ascent of Jesus to Heaven, its descent and subsequent return to Earth to complete its fertilization, likened to the condition of Qarun, one of Moses' enemies who possessed so much treasure that when he stuffed it into his clothing, he literally sank into the Earth under its weight.

Relying heavily on Qur'anic material, Manūchehrī proceeds to the next stage in his narrative, in which the vine is seen admonishing the vineyard farmer for having doubted her issue:

تاک رزگفتا : از من چه همی پرسی کافری کافر ، ز ایزد نه همی ترسی

به حق کرسی و حق آیت الکرسی که نخسبیده شبی در بر عن نفسی

هستم آبستن ، لیکن ز چنان جنسی

که نه اویستی جنسی و نه خود انسی

نه ستم رفته بمن زو و نه تلبیسی که مرارشته تاندا تافت ابلیسی

جبرئیل آمد روح همه تقدیسی کردم آبستن ، چون مریم بر عیسی (15)

بچه‌ای دارم در ناف چو برجیسی

بارخ یوسف و بوی خوش بلقیسی

'What are you asking me about, you godless creature
By the verse (throne) of al-Kursī, I
did not have one peaceful night. I am
pregnant but not from Man or Jinn, and nobody
has forced or deceived me; no devil can
entangle me,
And Gabriel came down, the spirit of
all good people, and made me pregnant, like
Mariam with Jesus.
I have a child in my womb whose spirit shines
like Jupiter.
And he has a radiant face like Joseph
And a bodily fragrance which recalls Bilqis.'

The Qur'anic allusions come thick and fast, with the most important lying with the reference to Mary, through which the process of fertilization becomes synonymous with, and magically transforms into, the process of insemination and the subsequent development of the seed/foetus, the grape here representing the womb in which the pip (the foetus) shines through its translucent flesh, a star (Jupiter) illuminating the Universe. The enchanting tale of the renegade vine which managed to confuse, then defy the keeper of the vineyard, is encapsulated in and symbolized by the mystery of Mary's conception of Jesus. The keeper, however, is angered by the vine's outburst, and threatens to abort her progress:

بکشم منت « لك الويل » بدان زاری که مسیحت بکند زنده بدشواری

(16)

'Woe betide you, for I will kill you
mercilessly

And the Messiah will find it difficult to
revive you.'

Manūchehrī, changing the emphasis from one of description of Nature to Praise (madīḥ), presents us with a playful paradox, since he here depreciates the divine power of Jesus by calling into doubt his ability to bring about the revival of something/someone who has died, in favour of the vineyard keeper, "a godless creature" who threatens to kill off the grape that he is supposed to nurture.

Is this poem merely a glorification of Wine in its description and eulogy of the one who grows and tends it, or can one see in it a deeper meaning where the conflict is to be viewed as an allegorical struggle informing the nature of power exercised, for example, in a society established on religious principles involving on the one hand the Sultān, as the temporal head, and on the other the religious community? But whatever the interpretation, one should certainly draw attention to the adroit and effective way in which Manūchehrī combines the technique of personification, which may indeed have been an innovation of his, along with the skilful employment of dialogue to both heighten and complicate the plot.

Another example of a multiple reference to Qur'anic figures, used to provide a backdrop against which various aspects of the patron's character will be sketched, is

provided by al-Mutanabbī. He uses a discriminating, rigorous palette, working with sober colours to produce an economical portrait whose features stand out in sufficient relief to catch the eye and render its viewing an intellectual and aesthetic experience. Of particular interest here is the reference to Jesus which bears a remarkable resemblance to one of the two references in Manūchehrī's verse which we have just discussed. This leads us to believe that Manūchehrī may well have used al-Mutanabbī's verse as a model for his own, thus providing us with an opportunity to compare the two poets' respective treatments of the Qur'anic material in general, and the figure of Jesus in particular. al-Mutanabbī in the lines below invokes the names of Alexander the Great, Moses and Jesus, using the hypothetical conditional clause structure as an opportunity to express a comparison between these figures and the patron he is praising:

لو كان ذو القرنين أعملَ رأيهِ لما أتى الظلماتِ صرناً شموسا
أو كان صادفَ رأسَ عازرَ سيفهُ في يومِ معركةٍ لأعيا عيسى
أو كان لُجُّ البحرِ مثلَ يمينهِ ما انشقَّ حتى جازَ فيه موسى

(17)

'Had Alexander the Great heeded the opinion of
my patron
When he went into the darkness, it would have
become (bright as) the sun
And if the head of ^cAzar had been met by my
patron's sword on the day of battle,
Jesus would have found it difficult to revive
him,
And if the deep sea was like his right hand
It would not have parted to let Moses cross.'

Since ^CAzar is reputed to have been revived by Jesus, the supposition is being made here that had he incurred his wounds from the patron's sword, then Jesus would have found that task difficult. In short, Jesus' capacity to perform a miracle is placed in inverse proportion to the power of the patron's sword which is at once a symbol and an extension of his executive and military power. Indeed, in both Manūchehrī's and al-Mutanabbi's versions, we note an identical emphasis where death or the threat of death is dealt with such power by the respective mamdūhs as to render Jesus' powers doubtful, and both poets' treatment involves a heavy reliance on Qur'anic references, but al-Mutanabbī's use of the conditional clause as a unifying device enables him to achieve an economy of expression which has a greater effect than that produced by Manūchehrī. al-Mutanabbī's seemingly disparate images generate, through parallelism and syntactic dependence, an integral movement and compactness in which various references are successfully worked together into the structure of the verse, to impart to it an intrinsic unity. The doubt raised as to the ability of Jesus to bring about the revival of ^CAzar, for example, constitutes an integral element of al-Mutanabbī's verse in terms of both structure and theme. To remove it would cause the whole verse to collapse.

Contrast this treatment with that of the detailed

description in Manūchehrī's verse where movement is generated around the structure rather than within it, calling to mind the style of a miniature painter. Manūchehrī, in this fashion, creates an elaborate portrait in which mood assumes an importance equal to that commanded by subject. We never lose sight of al-Mutanabbī's patron, but we are not quite so sure about Manūchehrī's objective, except to say that he successfully portrays Nature in conflict with Religion, in which Nature herself is represented as a mystery inexorably bound up with the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb.

Anvarī's treatment of the Qur'anic narrative of Jesus continues with the theme of revivification, and uses precisely the same technique as Manūchehrī and al-Mutanabbī. But, in this case, although the restorative power of Jesus is again judged less effective than the destructive power of the patron, the content is varied by appeal to a different image:

آنرا که تب لرزه حرب تو بگيرد عیسی نتند بر تن او تار توان را
(18)

'Around the body of the one trembling in
anticipation of your wrath (attack) descending
on him
(Even) Jesus would be unable to weave a
thread.'

the poet imparting to his patron an influence which proves too powerful for even Jesus to compete with. Thus, this comparison between Jesus and the patron works on the inverse principle also, the patron's power rendering that of Jesus doubtful.

We end this section of this chapter on the theme of revivification, as one of Jesus' miracles related in the Qur'ān, with two verses by Abū Tammām and ʿUnṣurī respectively, in which the comparison is articulated positively. Here, Abū Tammām places Jesus alongside his patron, ʿAyyāsh:

كَمْ دَعْوَةٍ لِي إِذَا مَكْرُوهَةٌ نَزَلَتْ
وَاسْتَفْجَلَ الْخَطْبُ يَا عَيَّاشُ يَا عِيسَى (19)

'How many times have I called upon you
When a disaster occurred
And the situation became grave
Oh ʿAyyāsh, Oh Jesus.'

The association of the patron with the figure of Jesus is effected by a simple but bold juxtaposition. Since the address made by the petitioner in the first hemistich is in the singular rather than the dual, it appears initially that he is also addressing only one person in the second hemistich and, consequently, that the figure of Jesus represents no more, in grammatical terms, than a noun qualifying rather than contrasting with that which precedes

it. By this rhetorical trick, the patron is fully equated (if not wholly identified) with Jesus and is therefore perceived to possess all his qualities. He is seen to respond to the petition for help from those whom we presume to be the victims of disasters, time and time again, his sense of humanity having a regenerative effect on the community in a similar manner to that achieved by the generosity of ^CUnṣurī's and Farrukhī's patrons. In common with al-Mutanabbī, Abū Tammām here uses language to achieve an economy of expression, eschewing hyperbole, unlike the Persian poets who resorted to it frequently as a means of decoration.

^CUnṣurī illustrates this point most effectively in a verse expressed in the thematic context of ghazaliyah using the rubā^C quatrain to hymn the praises of his beloved:

رفتن ز تو آموخت مگر کبک دری گوئی که دم پیمبر بی پدری	خوبی ز رخ تو بر گرفته است پری جان شده را ییمردگان باز بری
---	--

(20)

'Perhaps the angel took beauty from your
 Face
 And the partridge learned how to walk by
 imitating
 You,
 And you have restored life to the dead,
 As if invested with the breath of the Prophet
 who
 Has no father.'

^cUnṣurī here creates an elaborate image in the first line in which beauty emanates from the beloved being imitated not only by nature but also by immortal supernatural beings. This process is taken one step further in the second line where the beloved is invested with restorative qualities that one might initially associate with nature, but which are then clearly related to Jesus. Thus, the beloved is depicted as the personification of nature, the person from which emanates beauty, benignly affecting and reviving all that with which it comes into contact.

To complete this chapter, we cover several aspects of the existence of Jesus and his prophetic activities as related mainly in the Suras al-Ma'ida and āl-^cImrān. Anvarī seeks to praise his patron, for example, by emphasizing his sense of justice which is likened in its effect to the resurrection of Jesus:

ز عدالت زمین است چونانکه کوئی فرود آمد از آسمان باز عیسی

(22)

'As a result of your justice, it is as if
Jesus had descended from Heaven a
Second time.'

The patron's correct dispensation of justice is thus seen

as a religious task designed, like the resurrection of Jesus, to convince the world of God's word, his might and love. From this point, we infer that the patron is dispensing not his own but God's justice as His representative or shadow on Earth. The resurrection of Jesus here serves as both a rhetorical and a thematic device to give birth to and encourage this inference.

Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's treatment of the same theme bears a remarkable resemblance to Anvari's in terms of approach and the choice of one particular phrase, seeking to illustrate the effectiveness of the beneficent and just rule of his patron, by comparing the nature of its application and manifestation with the resurrection of Jesus:

<p>بشرق وغرب نیابند فتنه را مأوی بدوستیش فروود آید از فلک عیسی (22)</p>	<p>مدار هیچ عجب گر زحول قوت او به ایمنیش برون تازد از کمین مهدی</p>
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'Don't be surprised if discord fails to take
root in a land throughout which his influence
prevails, (extending) from East to West;
As a result of the security (which follows)
The Mahdi will come out of hiding,
And as a result of the Patron's love
Jesus will descend from Heaven.'

In the patron's domain, justice is seen to be openly practised successfully throughout the land, obviating the

need for conflict between Sunnis and the Shi^Ca which the reference to the Mahdī implies, the guided one who, according to Shi^Cite doctrine, would come out of his concealment to right all wrongs and establish justice on Earth. The Mahdī may well come out of hiding to fulfil his mission but there is no reason for him to do so, for the same reason that Jesus would be wasting his time descending to Earth to spread God's love, this being already abundantly spread throughout the land in the form of the just rule exercised by the patron. But they are nevertheless compelled to fulfil these tasks at their expense in favour of the patron, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī using a forced comparison between two rival figures to secure the advantage of one over the other. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's treatment makes for a more effective representation of his patron as God's shadow on Earth than that provided by Anvarī, since he expresses his ideas within a geographical, political and religious context, creating a greater area in terms of both depth and size for the patron symbolically to dispense his justice, thereby adding to the realism of his portrayal.

Rivalry is the subject of our next poem by Manūchehrī, the poet urging his patron to use his services rather than those of another:

بد گفتن اسرار آن کس، کومادح تو باشد باشد ز زشت نامی، باشد ز بدعواری
ای میر، مصطفی را گفتند کافران بد با آنهمه نبوت، وان فر کردگاری
چندان دروغ و بهتان، گفتند آن جهودان بر عیسی بن مریم، بر مریم و حواری⁽²³⁾

'The person who praises you has a bad reputation and cannot see his way; his panegyrics are therefore an insult to you. Oh prince, (see how) the godless (*kuffār*) maltreated the Prophet (*al-Muṣṭafā*) Despite the prophecy and the greatness accorded to him by God; in the same way the Jews maligned Jesus, Mariam and the disciples.'

Manūchehrī creates here a structure containing two extended similes constructed out of three comparisons. It is petitionary verse and at the same time a eulogy of his patron since he, on the one hand, is associated and becomes identified with the Qur'anic figures of Muḥammad and Jesus who, like him, have been ill-served and misunderstood by their respective contemporaries or servants. Thus, implicit in this eulogy is the denigration of the rival poet whom Manūchehrī is seeking to replace. Interestingly, Manūchehrī uses an ingenious method here, establishing a comparison which is qualified and heightened by the juxtaposition of other comparisons. This achieves an economy of expression which recalls the style of the Arab poets, al-Mutanabbī in particular. The latter provides us with an example even more taut in its structure. A simile is established first which is then qualified and heightened by an implied comparison:

ما مُقامي بأرضِ نخلةٍ إلا كَمُقامِ المسيح بينَ اليهود (24)

'My position in Nakhla resembles
That of Jesus among the Jews.'

Why exactly al-Mutanabbī felt ill at ease in Nakhla, we are not told. This line forms, however, a part of the nasīb section of the verse, and al-Mutanabbī here may have been expressing the feelings of a suitor rejected by a beautiful girl.

In our penultimate example, Anvarī describes the origin and nature of his patron's generosity in terms of the theory of emanation, comparing this process with the birth of Jesus:

موجود شد از توجود واحسان چونانکه مسیح شد ز مریم
(25)

'Generosity has emanated from you
In the same way Jesus was
Born of Mariam.'

Thus, the generosity of the patron is described as an innate virtue, present in him from birth, and not something acquired through experience. The patron's generosity, as a result of its association with the conception and birth of Jesus, achieved through simile, takes on a divine aspect that recalls the image of the light issuing from a candle.

We conclude this chapter with a section of a poem by Manūchehrī which provides an extended variation on the mythology of wine, making what amounts to an apologia for the grape, the value and power of the vine, itself being enhanced through a comparison with Jesus, in relation to his birth, his prophetic activities, his crucifixion and his subsequent resurrection.

وین قمه بسی خوبتر و خوشتر از آنست
این دختر رز را، نه لیست و نه دهانست
آبستنی دختر انگور به جانست
وین راج خداوند همه خلق جهانست
وینرا بکشند و بکشند، این بچانست
وین، زنده گر جان همه خلق زمانست
نا کشته کشته صفت این حیوانست
در کشتن این، قمد همه اهل قرانست
اینرا، نگر از کشتن اینها چه زیانست
وینرا، پس سختی ز همه رنج امانست
بر دست امیران و وزیرانش مکانست
از باده گران نیست، گفته از چو دگرانست
شمس الوزرا نیست که شمس الثقلانست
چون پیشرو نیزه خطی که سنانست
مہتر به دو کوچک به دلست و به زبانست
در اندو دوزان بسر کلک و بنانست
و اندر نسبش، هر چه یقین بود گمانست
در کار بزرگان همه ذلست و هوانست
داند که علی حال زمانه گذرانست

۲۱ بیشوی شد آبستن، چون مریم عمران
۲۲ زیرا که گر آبستن مریم بدهان شد
۲۳ آبستنی دختر عمران به پسر بود
۲۴ آن روح خداوند همه خلق جهان بود
۲۵ آنرا بگرفتند و کشیدند و بکشتند
۲۶ آن، زنده یکیرا و دورا کرد بمعجز
۲۷ نا کشته کشته صفت روح قدس بود
۲۸ گر قمد جهودان بد در کشتن عیسی
۲۹ آنرا نگر از کشتن آنها چه زیان بود
۳۰ آنرا، پس سختی ز همه رنج امان بود
۳۱ آنرا بسموات مکان گشت و مرا اینرا
۳۲ چون دست وزیر ملک شرق که دستش
۳۳ شمس الوزرا احمد عبدالصمد آنکو
۳۴ آن پیشرو پیشروان همه عالم
۳۵ مہتر ز همه خلق جهان و به دو کوچک
۳۶ در اندو دوزان بسر کلک نیایی
۳۷ اندر کرمش، هر چه گمان بود یقین شد
۳۸ خردک نگرش نیست که خردک نگرشنی
۳۹ دینار دهد، نام نکو باز ستانند

۴. هر حاشیه شاه جهان را وحشم را
 ۴۱ زیرا که ولایت چوتنی هست و درانتن
 ۴۲ دستور طبیعت که بشناسد شریان
 ۴۳ چون با ضربانست کند قوت او کم
 ۴۴ چون بی ضربان باشد، نیرو دهد آنرا
 ۴۵ این کار وزارت که همی راند خواه
 ۴۶ بود آن همگانرا غرض و مصلحت خویش
 ۴۷ هرگز ندهد خرد منش را بر خود راه
 ۴۸ از پشه عنا و الم پیل بزرگست
 ۴۹ خسرو تنه ملک بود او دله ملک
 ۵۰ ملکت چو چراگاه و رعیت رمه باشد
 ۵۱ لشکر چو سگان رمه و دشمن چون گرگ
 ۵۲ ما را رمه با نیست نه زو در رمه آشوب
 ۵۳ هرگز نکند با ضعفا سخت کمانی

هم مال دهنده ست و هم مال ستانست
 این حاشیه شاه رگست و شریانست
 چون با ضربان باشد و چون بی ضربانست
 و رکم نکند، بیم خناق از هیجانست
 ورنه دل ملک را بیم یرقانست
 نه کار فلان بن فلان بن فلانست
 اینرا غرض و مصلحت شاه جهانست
 کز خرد منش محتشمانرا حدثانست
 وز مور، فساد بجه شیر ژیانست
 ملکت چو قران، او چو معانی قرانست
 جلاب بود خسرو و دستور شبانست
 وینکار سگ و گرگ و رمه بار مه بانست
 نه ایمن ازو گرگ و نه سگ زو بفغانست
 با آنکه بدانندیش بود، سخت کمانست

- (21) Like Mary, daughter of Imran, it (the vine) conceived without husband, but this story is better and more pleasant than the former;
- (22) For if Mary's conception were through the mouth, this daughter of the vine has neither lip nor mouth.
- (23) Imran's daughter conceived a boy, but the conception of the daughter of the vine is of spirit;
- (24) That spirit (rūh) was the lord of all creatures of the world, and this wine (rāh) is the lord of all creatures of the world.
- (25) The one was seized, dragged off and slain, and the other will be dragged off and slain - how can this be?
- (26) He miraculously restored to life one or two dead people, but the wine revivifies the souls of all people of all times.
- (27) Being slain or not, being slain is an attribute of the holy spirit, being slain and not being slain is an attribute of this animate being.
- (28) If the Jews' intention was to slay Jesus, slaying this vine is the intention of all people of the Qur'ān.
- (29) Behold, what a loss there is in slaying that (being); behold, what a loss there is in slaying this vine.

- (30) After suffering, he was saved from all
pains,
and it will be saved from all pains after
suffering,
- (31) The place of Jesus is in Heaven,
but the place of wine is in the hands of
princes and ministers,
- (32) Like the hand of the ministers of the king of
the east,
whose hand is not heavy with wine but with
generosity.
- (33) The sun of ministers, Aḥmad-i-^CAbd ul-
Ṣamad,
not the sun of ministers, but the sun of this
world (and the next),
- (34) Who is the chieftain of the leaders of all the
world,
like the tip of the spear from Khaṭṭ which is
a spearhead.
- (35) Far above all people in two quiet tiny things,
superior in his heart and his tongue.
- (36) You can't mend a blotted line with the tip of
the finger only,
but with the tip of a pen together with the
finger.
- (37) In his generosity, all that may be imagined is
certain,
in his lineage all that is certain may be
imagined.
- (38) He is not mean-spirited, because mean-spirit is
not found
in the work of great men (because if it is
found) all is tyranny and oppression.
- (39) He gives dinars, and acquires a good name,
he knows that the world is perpetually
turning.

- (40) For the attendants of the king and his retinue,
he is both the the giver and receiver of
riches.
- (41) Because the kingdom is like a body, and in that
body
the attendants of the king are its veins and
arteries.
- (42) The minister is a physician in that he knows
when
the pulse in the arteries is strong and when
it is weak.
- (43) When the pulse is fast, he reduces its pace and
if he does not slow it, there is danger of
inflammation.
- (44) When the pulse is faint, he strengthens it -
if he did not, the heart of the kingdom might
suffer from jaundice.
- (45) This is the work of the ministry which the
Khajah carries out,
but it is not the work of so and so,
son of the son of so and so.
- (46) They all would have an eye to their own private
motives,
but he seeks the benefit of the king of the
world.
- (47) He never demeans himself, because meanness is a
taint for the powerful.
- (48) The great elephant's distress and affliction
comes from gnats,
and ants which may kill the cubs of ravening
lions.
- (49) Khusraw is the body of the kingdom, he its heart,
royalty is like the Qur'an, he like the
meaning on it.

(50) The kingdom is like a field, the people the flock
that grazes there -
the Khusraw is their owner and the minister is
the shepherd.

(51) The army are the sheepdogs, the enemy the wolves;
the responsibility for dogs, wolves and flock
is with the shepherd.

(52) We have a shepherd who does not give trouble to
his people,
he gives no peace to wolves, nor affliction to
the sheepdogs.

(53) He never oppresses the weak,
although he ever oppresses the wicked. (26)

In line 22, for example, the vine in its conception is seen, in contrast to that of Jesus, to be free of any anthropomorphic reference, lending to its image a transcendent, divine quality, further endorsed in line 26 where the vine is given the capacity to revive, echoing the feat of Jesus in his resuscitation of two dead men. The comparison is then intensified with the poet's definition of the material value of the vine to society being given divine emphasis when its loss, i.e. prohibition (in line 28) is associated with the crucifixion of Jesus. Thus, behind the ordinary sense of line 28, which makes the conduct of the Jews and Muslims dramatically opposed on a moral plane, lies the implication, powerfully reinforced by the chiastic pressure of the syntax, that their actions are rather equivalent and that the vine, like Jesus, is a sacrificial victim.

The comparison is, then, with the image of wine remaining pivotal, widened to include the eulogy of the princes and the ministers but, fundamentally, serving both as a basis for and an introduction to the political allegory endorsing the rule and administration of Khusraw, the heart of the nation, a just and generous King who, in his conduct, conforms to the ideal of an Islamic ruler.

How is it possible, then, for Manuchehri to imply that wine can be proscribed when its presence has graced many religious festivals, has the power to induce states of ecstasy through which many Sufis sought unification with God,⁽²⁷⁾ and when even Shi^Cite Imams might imbibe it as part of their ritual?⁽²⁸⁾ Indeed, given the symbolic reversal of values central to Sufi thought and so widely understood whereby wine became a sanctified means of mystical communication and enlightenment, it might be possible to discern in this poem a further level of allegory whereby the wine leads not simply to an image of Islamic righteousness but stands ultimately, as a direct counterpart to Jesus = Christianity, for Islam itself.

According to this interpretation, he presents in the first hemistich of verse 21 the Christian point of view regarding the birth of Christ and in the second hemistich the Islamic, which he considers better than the Christian version of Mary's conception without being touched by a man. In line 22, the poet refers to how divine revelation

came down to Muḥammad, having neither lips nor mouth because its appearance is unknown and, to that extent, it appears that the miracle of the dispensation of Islam is the greater. This form of allegorical interpretation may, with little difficulty, be continued through the section and does not require detailed elaboration.⁽²⁹⁾

As a yet further dimension, it might also be hypothesized that Manucéhri could have been referring to a native Persian scriptural tradition.⁽³⁰⁾ His description of rāh in its Qur'anic connotation is exactly parallel to the description of the sacred Hōm drink in the Yasna where Zoroaster says: "Hom creates goodness and cures; it has a tall body and it looks like gold, and its drinking brings relaxation and happiness to the soul."

Not only does it create a sense of well-being, but it also gives longevity, and is the best creation of Nature's Bounty in all the world. When it comes to Islam, where wine as such is not allowed, the same benefits are also considered to be bestowed by practice of the religion itself. It is not unlikely, surely, that Manūchehrī, with his Persian background, would have been aware of this further set of correspondences.

Similarly, in the Yasna, Zoroaster asked Hōm in the form of a god to give him the strength and ability to enable him to spread his chosen religion and to create justice in the

world and, in this way, to be able to guide people on the right path and to correct those who go astray.

Because Zoroaster asked Hōm for these favours, he acknowledged Hom to be one of the most important gods in the Indian and Persian pantheon. Zoroaster asked Hom on behalf of himself and of the rest of mankind the following requests: the purest of Life, Health, to elevate the spirit, Strength, Bravery, all these are required to fight Badness and Ugliness and to find security from highway robbers - those who appear suddenly with the evil intention to rob - and wild, fierce, animals. It is certainly not inconceivable that Manūchehrī was aware of this parallel between the Yasna and the Qur'ān.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

- (1) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Mā'ida V, 110-114.

Sūrat āl-^cImrān III, 45-49, 55.

Sūrat XIX, 17-33.

﴿١١٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ
الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ
تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي
وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَآئِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
مِنْهُمْ إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١١﴾ وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرُسُولِي قَالُوا
أَمَنَّا وَآشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ
أَنْ يُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ
مِنْهَا وَنَطْمِئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَّقَتْنَا وَنَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ
مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَآرْزُقْنَا
﴿٤٥﴾ إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا
يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ

- (2) G. Lazard, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, Cambridge, 1975, p.617.
- (3) A.K.S. Lambton, "The Theory of Kingship in the Nasihat al-Muluk of al-Ghazali", Vol.5, Islamic Quarterly, London, 1954, pp.47-55.
- (4) P.K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, London, 1956, 6th ed., pp.461-468.
- (5) A.K.S. Lambton, "The Theory of Kingship in the Nasihat al-Muluk of al-Ghazali", Vol.5, p.54.

- (6) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.55.
Qur'ān Surat āl-^CImrān III, 49.
- (7) A.K.S. Lambton, "The Theory of Kingship", Vol.V, pp.47, 55.
- (8) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.27.
- (9) Qur'ān Sūrat āl-^CImrān III, 49.
- (10) ^CUnşurī, Dīwān, p.136.
- (11) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.36.
- (12) C.E. Bosworth, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, Cambridge, 1975, pp.170, 171.
- (13) Hashim-i Raḍi, Gāhshumārī wa Jashnhāy-i Bāsītān, Tehran, 1358 A.H., pp.278-325.
- (14) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.200.
See Qur'ān Sūrat āl-^CImrān III, 55.
- (15) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.201.
Qur'ān Sūrat al-Baqra II, 255.

﴿٢٥٥﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ.

- (16) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.202.
- (17) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.143.
- (18) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.10.
- (19) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.II, p.257.
- (20) ^CUnşurī, Dīwān, p.297.
- (21) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.297.
- (22) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.149.
- (23) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.100.
- (24) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.72.

- (25) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.341.
- (26) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, pp.9-10.
- (27) A.J. Wensinck, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.4, (new ed.), Leiden, 1973, pp.994-997.
- (28) M. Hodgson, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.V, Cambridge, 1975, p.458.

With reference to the latter, Muhammad tolerated it until incidents involving drunkenness, viz: the slaughter of ^CAli's camels by the Prophet's drunken uncle Hamza b. ^CAbd al-Muttalib, became too frequent to overlook, the proscription forbidding the drinking of wine eventually finding its way into Sura 92, verse .

In the Babylonian era, wine was so strong that it had to be diluted; in the Judaic period of Middle East history, Noah was noted for his drunkenness, and in the ^CAbbasid era Abu Nuwas for his khamriyāt. In 5th/6th century Persia the cup of wine was handed round at the festivals marking the wine-harvest (sada). Wine (always thought to possess holy qualities) has never ceased to play a vital part in the socio-religious ceremonies or gatherings that constituted a part of everyday life of Middle Eastern societies, particularly in 5th/11th century Persia where, although the drinking of wine was technically forbidden, the proscription was largely ignored. See A. Macalister, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, (ed. J.Hastings), Vol.II, Edinburgh, 1899, p.33.

Muhammad al-Nūwaihī, Nafsiyyat Abi Nuwās, Beirut, 1970, pp.25, 26.

^CAbd al-Rahman Sidqī, 'Alḥān al-Ḥān, Egypt, 1957, pp.168-170

Abū Nuwās says:

أَثْنُ عَلَى الْخَمْرِ بِأَلَايِهَا ، وَسَمَّيَا أَحْسَنَ أَسْمَائِهَا

G. Iazard, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, Cambridge, 1975, p.621.

- (29) Interestingly enough, a contemporary scholar, Frithjof Schuon, has made a similar type of comparison concerning the nature of Islam and of Christianity in his two books (Understanding Islam, London, 1963 and Dimensions of Islam, London, 1969) in which he makes the claim that Jesus was divinely conceived by the Virgin Mary just as the Qur'an was

divinely conceived in the prophet Muhammad's mind - thus pointing out that both the Virgin Mary and Muḥammad are ummī (illiterate innocents) and receptacles of God's word. Thus he shows that the real equivalent of Jesus for Islam is the Qur'an.

- (30) Hāshim-i Raḍī, Farhang-i Nāmhay-i Avistā, Vol.III, Tehran, 1346 A.H., pp.1405-1427.

Zaradusht, Avistā, (ed.Jalil-i Dustkhah), Tehran, 1361 A.H., pp.50, 51, 110, 113, 114-126, 139, 303, 325, 330, 336, 347, 365.

R.C. Zaehner, "An Essay in the Comparison of Religions", At Sundry Times, London, 1958, pp.152-153.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POETS' TREATMENT OF THE PROPHETIC MATERIAL

IN THE QUR'ĀN

(3) SOLOMON

In this chapter, we propose to deal with the events related in the narrative of the Ant. These events mark the progress of Solomon's mission to convey God's warning to the residents of Sheba and their Queen, Bilqis, to cease worshipping idols. The key stages referred to are listed in sequence in the table below as they appear in the Qur'anic narrative. However, as we shall see, all but one of the poets utilize one event only, the exception being al-Buhturi, who refers to two in a manner that echoes the progress of the Qur'anic narrative. Each event has a function and meaning of its own which operates independently of those that precede and follow. Persian examples will be discussed and compared with similar like-minded examples composed by Arab poets covering the same themes and events, and expressed in the same thematic areas against a comment on the historical and cultural backgrounds of both races which came to gradually overlap and partially merge as the influx of Persian culture began to exert its influence on Arab society, a process accelerated during the ʿAbbasid era, especially during, and after, the Caliphate of Ma'mūn, that witnessed a resurgence of Persian Nationalism. In particular, we

propose to discuss the works of Farrukhi and Manuchehri in tandem, comparing them, at the same time, with some examples of Arab poets. That Farrukhi was a contemporary of Manūchehrī offers the opportunity to contrast their respective styles. We note that the former poet's style is simple and taut, displaying little use of hyperbole as he tended to work within the tradition of the Arabian qaṣīda with its noted poetic restrictions.

Manūchehrī, for his part, as the Persian language became increasingly the vehicle for the expression of his poetry, tended to use the musammat as much as the conventional qaṣīda form - a special type of qaṣīda divided into distinct stages by the use of rhyme. The Arabic Qaṣīda with its monorhyme and monometer militates against use of the stanza form, since each bayt, consisting of two hemistichs, is rendered independent of the preceding and following lines despite frequent occurrence of enjambment.

Each stanza in the musammat form is composed of three bayts in which the first five miṣrā^c rhyme, and the sixth rhymes with each succeeding final miṣrā^c, thus:

a a / a a / a b

c c / c c / c b

d d / d d / d b

Although in the musammat form the subject matter and overall structure does not differ from the qaṣīda, the form

itself does, however, allow the poet to express himself more freely, unhindered by the conventions associated with the Arabic qaṣīda which require that the poet begin his ode with the nasīb followed by the takhalluṣ, leading onto the subject proper. It is in this genre that Manūchehrī displays his technical virtuosity creating vivid, original similes and metaphors rich in hyperbole and rhetoric.

Farrukhī's simplicity of style is to be ,perhaps, attributed to his social background as a farmer in Sistān where he would have received little education. Often he assumed a peasant-like appearance in dress which betrayed his social origins but belied his standing as probably the finest court poet among the Persians.

The majority of examples under discussion here fall, as usual, within the thematic area of madīḥ but there are also a few examples of the didactic poem, one of pederastic poetry, shī^cr al-ghilmān by Abū Nuwās, and one example of ascetic poetry, zuhd by Abū al-^cAtāhiya. Allusions to the narrative of Solomon are normally used to strengthen the patron's political authority by appeal to divine sanction, but could also be used to warn or remind him of his duty to uphold the religious values on which Muslim society was founded in order to retain the continuing respect of his subjects - the objective, in particular, of the one didactic poem discussed below.

Dominant motifs here are the throne of Bilqis with its royal qualities and the prestige implied by association with it, and the hoopoe bird or lapwing, all references which serve to underline the equation of the patron with Solomon.

The table also includes references to two events taken from the qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā' which pertain to the ring of Solomon and the guard Asif. The qiṣaṣ al-'anbiyā' is, in effect, an explanation (tafsīr) of the treatment of the lives of the prophets contained in the Qur'ān, and the material is included here to complement the poets' reference to the Qur'anic narrative of Solomon. It will be noted that the statistics show that the Persian examples on this subject outnumber the Arabic ones by a ratio of 5:1:

KEY: U = ^CUnṣurī / AA = Abū al-^CAtāhiya
 F = Farrukhī / N = Abū Nuwās / MA = Manūchehrī
 B = al-Buhturī / R = Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī
 AT = Abū Tammām / AV = Anvarī / MU = al-Mutanabbī

SOLOMON	U	B	F	MU	MA	N	R	AA	AV	AT
Receipt of wisdom	2	3	3	2	2	4	3	2	10	3
Control over Jinn, animals and wind	1								15	
The Ant				1			2		6	

The Hoopoe					5	1				
Bilqīs/her throne	1	2			2		2		5	
Solomon's ring	1				1				5	
The guard Āṣif					1		1		9	
<u>Total</u>	4	4	5	3	11	5	8	2	49	3

We noted in the previous chapter covering the poets' treatment of the prophetic material that allusions to the Qur'ān were used in the main to emphasize the patron's moral worth. We may begin by considering verses in which appears the first of the motifs in the table. Among those by the Persian poets, the most typical example of madīḥ is that by Farrukhī:

خسرو نشسته تاج شه هند پیش او چو نانکه تخت گوهر بلقیس پیش جم
(1)

'The Sultan sat with, before him, the Crown of the Indian king, just like the jewelled throne of Bilqis before Solomon.'

Situations in which Solomon and the Sultan (Maḥmūd Ghaznavī) find themselves are reinforced by the syntactic chiasmus. The strength of the Sulṭān lay in his hidden power and mystique, able to will before him the crown of the Indian king, echoing the feat of Solomon. The

technique could not be more simple and effective. Another characteristic of Farrukhī's poetry is, as we see in the above verse, to remain faithful to the spirit of the Qur'anic material he uses in his verses, while incorporating it within a line of his own creation in order to achieve his objective, in this case, praise of his patron.

In the following verse of Manuchehri, the approach is quite different, the poet praising the qualities of his riding animal by way of tribute to the pre-Islamic ode:

نشستم از برش چون عرشِ بلقیس سجست او چون یکی غریبِ هایل (2)

'I rode my she-camel just like the throne of Bilqīs and it lurched like a huge ^cifrīt.'

The very mention of the (she) camel conjures up a number of references and emotive images peculiar to the Bedouins' experience of desert life reflected in pre-Islamic poetry. On one level, the she-camel is being praised for her quality of speed which becomes apparent through the reference to the throne of Bilqis, transported from the Queen of Sheba's abode to Solomon's palace within the time it takes to blink an eye. The mention of the ^cifrīt figure in the second hemistich, whose origin goes back to the pre-

Islamic era, recalls the mythology of the Arabian desert which is said to have been inhabited by strange, amorphous creatures that the Bedouin feared, respected and sometimes paid homage to.⁽³⁾ But its introduction here not only reinforces the pre-Islamic echoes but also, cunningly, reinforces the Qur'anic association since it was a stalwart of the ʿifrīt/jinn who first offered to bring the throne of Bilqis to Solomon.

At this juncture, we must take into consideration the attitude of the ʿAbbasid and Persian poets to the Qur'ān, and the nature of the reflection of Qur'anic usages in their poetry. The ʿAbbasid poets were heirs to a culture in which the Qur'ān - a series of revelations handed down to Muḥammad by God's messenger, Gabriel - assumed a central position. The Qur'ān was considered to be not only a religious book, but a literary work of the highest quality. However, it occupied a position far removed from that of poetry, and to imitate its style would have been regarded as an impious act - or indeed, given the doctrine of iʿjāz, something impossible of attainment. But despite this common background there are clear differences.

The ʿAbbasid poets showed more restraint, for example, in the use of Qur'anic sources than the Persians in the eulogy (madīḥ) of their patrons for two very good reasons. Firstly, the ʿAbbasid poets, including Abū Nuwās, were more bound and affected by the Islamic ethos that pervaded all

levels of Arab society; this spirit was embodied in the Sharī^Cah, the divinely revealed law of Islam which took its precepts from the Qur'an and to which even the Caliph was beholden. In this sense, he was no different from any other citizen.⁽⁴⁾ The Persian poets, for their part, continued to enjoy their own culture and language of ancient standing far into the Islamic period, merely paying lip service to Islam as a means to enjoy the administrative benefits of the Islamic empire whilst eschewing the religious obligations and contravening the laws that many of its citizens continued to uphold.⁽⁵⁾

Secondly, for an Arab poet to openly praise and heap hyperbole on his patron, as his Persian counterpart did, in the volatile field of ^CAbbasid politics, was to lay himself open to criticism and danger once his patron had fallen out of favour at the ^CAbbasid court. We find in Persian poetry, however, an acceleration of hyperbole occurring within an established literary tradition which, in itself, offered protection to the Persian poet once the patron he had so lavishly praised had either fallen out of favour or had died. The modern equivalent of this role would be filled by the civil servant serving one minute under a Conservative administration, the next under a Labour one, but essentially remaining neutral in his function.

Like its Persian equivalent, Arab poetry flourished

under the patronage of the court and duly, as is evident in the dīwān of Abū Nuwās, for example, reflected the ideas and manners prevalent in court circles.⁽⁶⁾ His poetic style could be described as clear, with a delicacy and exactness of expression, precise in meaning, but the very little trace of hyperbole in his work shows that the ^CAbbasid poet, of whom Abu Nuwas is a representative figure, had not yet reached the stage where he became in general wholly occupied with style at the expense of content (Abū Tammām excepted), as was the case towards the end of the 10th century when al-^CAskarī formulated his work on poetics, declaring that technique, the rhetorical devices and figures of speech, and not the subject matter, should constitute the criteria by which the quality of a poem is to be judged.⁽⁷⁾

Nevertheless, Abū Nuwās, as an Arab poet imbued with strong Persian sympathies and leanings, often cocked a snook at the prevailing morality of his age by mocking the Qur'ān in the usage of its material. In the following line, he attempts to describe his mistress, comparing and matching the various parts of her anatomy with the characteristics belonging to or describing outstanding people or their artefacts. Her voice, for example, is likened to the sound emitted by the flute of David, and so on, until he arrives at the description of the main part of her body:

(8) وَيَا عَرْشَ سُلَيْمَانَ ، إِذَا هُمْ بِأَسْفَارِ

'O throne of Solomon, if it intends to do journeys.'

Her body thus becomes yielding and obedient, as all things animal and mineral do when they fall under his control. Abū Nuwās here uses the Qur'anic allusion to Solomon to reinforce the erotic attractions of his mistress.

In contrast to Abū Nuwās, al-Buḥturī shows more respect in his treatment of the Solomon theme. Here, he describes the pool of his patron:

كَأَنَّ جِنَّ سُلَيْمَانَ الَّذِينَ وَلَّوْا إِبْدَاعَهَا ، فَادَّقُوا فِي مَعَانِيهَا
فَلَوْ تَمَرُّ بِهَا بِلَقِيسٍ عَنْ عَرَضٍ قَالَتْ هِيَ الصَّرْحُ تَمْثِيلًا وَتَشْبِيهَا

(9)

'As if the Jinn of Solomon who were
Charged to create it
Realized each detail to perfection
And if she (Bilqis) was to pass by it
(Surely) she would say it resembles exactly
the Hall of Solomon.'

A striking feature of the above lines, in contrast to the examples of the Persian poets on the same subject, is that they show a narrative development and progression that roughly corresponds to the Qur'anic version of the story alluded to on two occasions. Of these two allusions, the

first associates the patron with Solomon, endowed with divine power and the ability to control beasts, jinns and humans,⁽¹⁰⁾ thereby underlining his political authority. The second is to Bilqīs, the poet here executing a neat reversal of her mistaking Solomon's palace for a pool: here it is the pool that is being mistaken for the palace of Solomon. The two lines afford the poem a well-rounded appearance that is complemented by a sober rhetoric which tends away rather than towards the use of hyperbole and complicated metaphors, constituting a fine example of the smooth and polished style so typical of al-Buḥturī's poetry in which he has managed to describe his patron, by using Qur'anic references, as a figure yielding great power out of which can only arise perfection but, at the same time, without demeaning the figure of Solomon or being, in any way, irreverent. Thus, while al-Buḥturī, working within the context of madīh, is obliged to depict Solomon in a dignified manner, Abū Nuwās, writing ghazal, can afford to be playful and flippant in his treatment of the same figure.

The image of Solomon's palace looms large in the following example by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, the purpose of which is to eulogise his patron, the son of a prominent minister, who is alluded to in a phrase taken from the Qur'anic text describing that which Bilqīs mistook for a pool:

دریا گذار مرکب او را گه گذار

دریا سراب وفد فد مهتاب فرقد است

ایدون چو باد نرم گرازان شود برآب

(11) گوئی که آب جوهر صرح ممرد است

'When he was crossing the sea in his boat,
the sea was (like) a mirage and level ground,
the light of the moon (like) a canopy.
Now he sails on the water full of confidence,
as if the water was as smooth as glass.'

The qualities of smoothness, calmness and self-assurance alluded to and conjured up by the above images add a certainty to, complement and enhance the patron's character. He is seen to move effortlessly through life without encountering any obstacles. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, here, imparts movement to a static image of perfection and, by associating the patron with this new, galvanized image, he confers on him also this quality of perfection, lending to the poet's rhetorical activity an alchemic quality of which the chief elements are complicated metaphor, allusion, hyperbole and symbol.

Interestingly, this is what ^CUnşurī, composing one century earlier than Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, achieves in his verse hymning the praises of his patron Sultān Maḥmūd through a description of his palace. In doing so, ^CUnşurī employs the same phrase **صرح ممرد** and the image it invokes, using imagery of a more concrete form where the metaphors assume a more obvious guise, and where the

allusion to the Qur'ān becomes less oblique and more immediate than employed by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, although none the less effective for all that:

وگریکی بدر خانه ژرف در نگری

کشیده بینی حصنی ز گوهر الوان

رواق تخت سلیمان و آب زیر رواق

(12) بسان صرح ممر که خلق ازو بگمان

'If you look attentively at the door (of the patron's house)

You will see a bejeweled castle of multi-faceted colour appearing like Solomon's throne
Surrounded by water as smooth as glass, as if people perceived it as floating.'

One can see that this Qur'anic phrase effectively serves to reinforce and extend the reference to Solomon whereas Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's metaphors progress by following a linear pattern. However, ^cUnşurī builds them methodically brick by brick. A door becomes encrusted with jewels and then transforms into a castle, a stronghold fortified by a moat, its water endowed with the characteristic or quality of stillness, calm and clarity, from which is created an image that the palace of Solomon can be likened to with ease, only to be further developed by the specific image of the (صرح ممر). As the images are built up, so the person of the patron gains in importance, finally assuming an ethereal aspect as he is seen to occupy a phantasmagorical abode floating on what appears to be an equally ethereal substance. It is as if each image confirms the reality of

the preceding one without encountering or experiencing any internal contradictions in the building process, a factor which is complemented by and finds expression in the perfect formal unity of the poem.

Anvarī's treatment of the Qur'anic theme of Solomon's armies has the objective of instilling into the opposition profound fear and awe of his patron, a certain Fayruz Shah, comparative to that inspired by Solomon and his armies as described in the Qur'anic narrative:

از بیم سپاهش سپاه خصم چون مور نهان گشته در زمین (13)

'His enemies' troops hide like ants beneath
The earth in fear of the patron's army.'

the above two lines affording us a good example of the poet's hyperbolic praise of his patron's might.

Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī pursues a similar path in his praise of his patron, Taha ^cAlī b. Mishkān, the minister to the Sultān and advisor to the Treasury. The poet here draws a comparison between the power of the patron that, in its potential, can at once seem to be devastating and ruthless in its manifestation and effect, and arbitrary in whom, what, when, where and how it chooses its victims once unleashed, and the natural forces or elements of Fire and Water, equally inexorable and archaic in their way their

energies are released:

بدان نکردد گردشکار آتش و آب
بدان کند خند از رهگذار آتش و آب

مکر گرینز که تنگشان شناسد باز
مکر که شاهی جمشیدشان شناسد مور

(14)

'Perhaps the hawk knows how difficult it is to escape their clutches, and that is why it does not fly around fire and water. Perhaps the She-Ant is fully aware of the two Solomons, as she prepares herself to avoid their twin paths of fire and water.'

This comparison becomes a unified image when the patron assumes the title of the Knight of Fire and Water, elements with which his powers become synonymous, but which impart to his character a dual element once the connection is made through the allusion to the Qur'anic narrative of Solomon in which the figure of the Ant assumes a central position. Thus, the image emerges of a patron composed of two constituent elements which galvanize him into action, presenting an anarchic, intense image of nature giving vent to its fury which no man, power, force or army can contend with at the height of its power. Here, the poet expresses power as kinetic energy.

This same concept of limitless energy that the patron is seen to possess, waiting to be unleashed in the form of a

merciless army against a potential enemy, is reflected in al-Mutanabbī's panegyric of his Hamdanid patron, Sayf al-Dawlah, whom we have had cause to speak of in relation to al-Mutanabbī's poetry earlier in this chapter. Al-Mutanabbī here is describing the troops of Sayf al-Dawlah's army, but its composition suggests a parallel with the Qur'anic figure of Solomon whose divine power allows him control over beasts, humans and Jinn:

(15) له عسكراً خيلٍ وطيرٍ إذا رمى بها عسكراً لم يبقَ إلا جماجمه

'He has armies of horses and falcons which, if they were to be released against another army, would leave nothing (of them) except their skulls.'

Here we note the typical characteristics of al-Mutanabbī's style, the skill taken in the construction of his lines, evident in the use of the conditional sentence with its effect through syntax rather than lexis, the final exceptive reinforcing rather than restricting the awesome power of the patron's armies.

The objective of both al-Mutanabbī and Anvarī is to praise their respective patrons, yet Anvarī's rendition betrays a servility evident in the all too obvious attitude to please, expressed in the direct allusion to the Qur'anic figure of the Ant. al-Mutanabbī's version, however,

conveys the sense of the patron's might less directly, as a potential, a pent-up force waiting to be unleashed.

There are occasions when the Persian poets reveal the presence of several literary influences working within one single poem. Manūchehrī, for example, displays a knowledge in the verse below not only of Qur'anic narrative - specifically the passage in which Solomon deals with the devils - but also, indirectly, of the qīṣaṣ al-'anbiyā', effectively an explanation (tafsīr) of the treatment of the lives of the prophets in the Qur'anic narratives:

خسرو ما پیش دیو جم سلیمان شده ست وان سر شمشیر او مهر سلیمان جم
(17)

'Our king (the patron) before the devils
became Solomon
And on his sword is engraved Solomon's signet
ring.'

In the lives of the Prophets we are told that Solomon summoned the birds to appear before him by placing a ring on his finger. This endows him with special powers which are transferred to the patron's sword on which it is symbolically inscribed, completing and formalizing a process began in the first hemistich where the patron assumed the identity of Solomon through the Qur'anic allusion to the figures of the devils compelled to service the interests of Solomon.

In this way, the allusion in the qiṣaṣ al-'anbīyā' is made subordinate to the Qur'anic allusion, thus justifying our reference to it as additional means used by Manūchehrī to enhance the position of his patron. What stands out above all in the verse, however, is the political concept of a leader or monarch whose rule is given divine sanction in order to strengthen his political authority over his subjects, a recurring theme throughout the works of the poets under discussion.

Anvarī, like Manūchehrī in the previous verse, manages to produce images whose suggestive power or efficacy depends partly on the strong allusion to the Qur'anic narratives:

پیشش بدل دیو و دام و دد درهم زده صفهای حورعین
(18)

'Before his patron a row of Houris stands in
line
Instead of devils and beasts.'

Anvarī here composes a verse rich in hyperbole, successfully creating a positive image of his patron in which he is made to appear spotless and his conduct seen to be exemplary, not so much by his association with the houris themselves as by the contrast of Solomon's with the devils. Such poetry has a further psychological impact on the audience listening to the verses, who would have been

familiar with the Qur'anic allusions made by Anvarī and have had their self-esteem correspondingly enhanced, finally departing from the reading convinced not only of the patron's moral superiority but also of their own.

The power of Solomon's ring, alluded to in Manūchehrī's verse describing his patron standing before the devils, is referred to directly by ^cUnşurī as he praises his patron Sultan Mahmud for his generosity:

مگر سخاوت او بود مهر خاتم جم

که گشته بود مر او را مطیع دیو و پری (19)

'Maybe his generosity is like the precious
stone of Solomon's ring
Whose summoning the devil and the angel
obeyed.'

The allusion, in the first hemistich to the story of Solomon who commands the devil and the angel to appear before him, just as he commanded the birds to appear before him, by placing his ring on his finger, serves to establish the efficacy of Solomon's ring; the precious stone set within it, then, can be safely compared with the generosity of the patron, creating a beautiful metaphor where the figure of the patron appears as a divine body in which his generosity, as a virtue, happily resides, just as a jewel rests becalmed inside a ring.

In one of Anvarī's examples describing the hoopoe bird, we discussed the poet's skilful use of allusion to laud his patron, placing him on a higher pedestal than that constructed for Solomon, in a way typical of the flattering and servile Persian court poet. In the following example, we detect, however, a different note in this poet's manner towards his patron, reflected not only in the verse's contents but in its tone also, at the same time illustrating the variety of material which the Persians borrowed from the Arabian poetic tradition, on this occasion the didactic poem, which they adapted to suit their own needs. Here the poet exhorts his patron to show humility and generosity of spirit, perhaps to a defeated opponent or to a group of people predominantly religious in character, or just plainly urging him to contain his arrogant behaviour, which might be interpreted as un-Islamic in spirit by the more religious members of society:

ای ترا گشته مسخر حشم دیو و پری کوش تا آب سلیمان پیمبر نبری

(20)

'All who are the troops of Devils and Angels
Fall under your control (as servants)
Do your best not to violate
Solomon's honour.'

The audience is here reminded of Solomon's injunction to the Queen of Sheba not to exalt herself above a prophet of

Islam. In the first hemistich, it would appear that Anvarī is praising his patron exalting him indeed above Solomon by granting him power over angels as well as demons. But the impetus of this praise is immediately lost in the exhortation itself in which the poet reminds his patron that, although he has such great power, he should curb any temptation to tyrannical excess and exert it in a proper and honourable fashion. Anvarī makes another plea to the patron to help a group of his starving subjects; he encourages him by invoking the name of Solomon who, endowed with a knowledge of animal language, showed a similar compassion for the She-Ant, heeding and acknowledging her fears as she expressed and shared them with the rest of the colony:

در زوایايش همه طایفه‌ای منقطعند بوده خواهان تو عمری بدعای سحری
 توسلیمانی و این طایفه موران ضعیف همه از خانه بزورن و همه از دانه بری
 ظاهر و باطن ایشان همه پای ملخ است چه شود کز سربای ملخی در گذری
 (21)

'There are in the suburbs (of Balkh city)
 Sections of poor people who make supplication
 (to God)
 On your behalf
 Very early in the morning (at dawn prayer)
 You are Solomon and these are weak ants
 And all of them are out of the house looking
 for seeds
 They appear and, indeed, are like an
 insubstantial leg of a locust
 Then what will happen to the leg of the locust
 if you pay no heed.'

A further allusion is made which is built on and reinforces the first, this time to the qīṣaṣ al-'anbiyā' in which it is recalled that an ant presented Solomon with a locust's leg which he received with kindness. This verse is skilfully designed to play on the sympathies of the patron and stir his heart into action to help the good but starving Muslims by casting him as Solomon, caring for the least of his kingdom's creatures. These lines are interesting on a level other than the rhetorical, as a social comment on the times - the events which moved the poet to make his plea have a firm foundation in historical fact - and for the light they shed on the possibility of the poet combining with panegyric an involvement with wider issues, expressed as a plea that uses flattery as a vehicle for social comment.(22)

On what better note to turn to the zuhd poetry of Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, who makes a similar plea to the ordinary citizen through the vehicle of zuhd poetry as Anvari does to his patron in the didactic poem. Abū al-ʿAtāhiya frequently uses Qur'anic ideas, images and phrases in his ascetic poetry in order to emphasize the mortality of the world and the vanity of its pleasures; in the lines below, however, he laments the absence of any great moral leaders to whom the ordinary man could turn to in what amounts to, at the same time, a religious adaptation of the ubi sunt motif:

أَيْنَ دَاوُدُ أَيْنَ أَيْنَ سُلَيْمًا نَ الْمَنِيْعُ الْأَعْرَاضِ وَالْأَجْنَادِ
(23)

Where is David; where, oh, where is
Solomon
Of unimpeachable honour and their
descendants.'

We now pass to a discussion of our final three examples in this chapter, from zuhd poetry to that composed by the mujūn poet Abu Nuwas whose reference to the Qur'anic figure of the Hoopoe bird forms a significant part of a verse to be compared with Manūchehrī's treatment of the same Qur'anic figure, in turn to be compared with Anvarī's rendition in which the same image features.

It is with a distinct measure of caution that Abū Nuwās embarks on his description of the hoopoe bird in what amounts to an acknowledgement of the importance of the status of prosody and poetry in 'Abbasid society, to the extent that a Qur'anic figure, taken from narrative of Solomon, is seen to bow down before one of its practioners, expressed in ghazal:

فإن كان عَرُوضِيًّا ، فقولوا : سجدَ الهُدُهدُ
(24)

'If he was a prosodist, You would say
The Hoopoe would fall down (on his
knees).''

Here, a double meaning is attached to the word 'prosodist', either to be taken as a noun, the object of kana, or adjectively, implying the offering of oneself to another for whatever purpose. As Abū Nuwās had a sexual preference for boys, it is not unlikely that this second interpretation should carry with it a sexual connotation.

In Manūchehrī's example, we see that he uses the hoopoe bird as his central image and, through the use of extended simile, creates an allegory in which deceit forms the main ingredient in a political or court intrigue:

هدهدك پيك بريدست كه در ابرتند چون «بريدانه مرقع» بتن اندر فكنند
 راست چون پيكان نامه بسزاند بزنند نامه كه باز كند، كه بهم اندر^ه شكند
 بدو منقار زمين چون بنشيند بكنند

(25)

گویی از بیم کند نامه نهان بر سر راه

'The little hoopoe travels quickly through the clouds, like a postman wearing patched clothes, placing on his head a letter which he sometimes opens, then folds, And when he lands, he pecks the ground as if to conceal his sin (letter) out of fear.'

This image of the hoopoe bird as a postman is reinforced through extended simile, the extended crest in motion suggesting the opening and folding of a letter. The hoopoe/postman, however, commits the cardinal sin of abusing the trust placed in him by breaking the seal of the letter. Manūchehrī may be attempting to reflect in his allegory here some kind of political intrigue which

occupied him and the court during a particular period, depicting the hoopoe bird as a spy who has weaseled himself into the confidence of the Sultān or that of one of his high-ranking ministers; or the hoopoe may be playing the role of confidante, traversing to and fro between two parties, the poet aptly choosing the context of tabī^ca (description of Nature) here to embellish his portrayal.

Thus, while Manūchehrī elaborates a great deal in his rendition, choosing the hoopoe bird not only as a basis for his imagery but as a central focus for his subject around which he weaves a great deal of detail, Abū Nuwās, for his part, uses the image alone and, through skilful allusion, creates a great deal of ambiguity in his portrayal to avoid, one supposes, laying himself open to too much criticism of his sexual behaviour. Anvarī's description of the hoopoe bird, expressed in madīh, relies on the power of allusion to suggest what is not and to confer substance on what is insubstantial, blaspheming the religion of Islam by appropriating to his patron a divine knowledge equal to that conferred on Gabriel, thereby impugning also Muḥammad indirectly. As in Manūchehrī's version, the hoopoe bird assumes a central place as a messenger figure:

اسرار وجودش همه یقین	بی سابقه وحی جبرئیل
از جنبش روم و قرار چین (26)	بی واسطه هدهدش خبر

'Without the revelation of Gabriel he (the patron) knows the secrets of the word; without the intervention of the Hoopoe, he is informed of the (military) movements of the Byzantine (army) and the peaceful mood (prevailing) in China.'

The association of the hoopoe bird with the patron recalls the relationship between the messenger bird and his master, Solomon, as related in the Qur'anic narrative, the latter relying heavily for his political information on the former. How much superior, then, the patron is considered to Solomon, since he, unlike the prophet, does not require the services of an intermediary to ascertain that which he knows by instinct. This allusion is reinforced by the association of the patron with Gabriel (and, by implication, Muḥammad) in the first hemistich, the patron divining rather than receiving that kind of knowledge considered the sole repository of God. Within this parallel structure, hyperbole and blasphemy reside happily side by side, one feeding off the other as the poet seeks to place his patron on a high pedestal. The efficacy of Abū Nuwās's allusion in his treatment of this subject, however, rests with the poet's skilful use of language, expressing no hyperbolic quality at all, whilst Manūchehrī cannot be said to have blasphemed in his portrayal of the hoopoe bird.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

(1) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.226.

Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naml XXVII, 38, 39, 40.

﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا

الْمَلَكُ أَتَيْتَنِي بِعَرْشِي قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ عَفَرْتُ مِنْ الْجِنَّ أَنَا أَتَيْتُكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٍّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتَيْتُكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي

(2) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.55.

(3) J. Chelhold, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.III, (new ed.), 1978, p.1050.

(4) A.K.S. Lambton, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.IV, (new ed.), pp.947-50.

(5) D. Sourdel, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.I, (new ed.), Leiden, 1978, pp.1033-1036.

(6) P. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.407.

(7) J.W. Fuck, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.I, (new ed.), Leiden, 1960, p.712.

(8) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.298.

(9) al-Buḥturī, Dīwān, p.35.

(10) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naml XXVII, 17.

﴿١٧﴾ وَخُسِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

and Sūrat Saba' XXXIV, 12, 13.

﴿١٢﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوها

شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِنَّ مَنْ يَعمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ وَمَنْ يَريْغُ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٣﴾ يَعمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبَ وَتَمَاثِيلَ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَاسِيَاتٍ أَعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَابِلُ مِنْ عِبَادِي الشُّكُورُ

(11) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, pp.38, 39.

Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naml XXXIV, 41-44

﴿٤١﴾ قَالَ

نَكِرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرُ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ أَهَكَذَا
عَرْشُكَ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً
وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقِهَا قَالَتْ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ مَعَ
سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ .

(12) ^cUnşurī, Dīwān, p.204.

(13) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.374.

(14) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.19.

(15) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.246.

(16) al-Sayyid Ni^cmat Allāh al-Jaza'irī, al-Nūr al-Mubīn
fī Qiṣaṣ al-'Anbiyā' wa al-Mursalīn, Beirut, 1978,
p.406.

(17) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.61.

(18) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.374.

Qur'ān, Sūrat Ṣād XXXVIII, 37.

﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ كُلَّ بَنَّاءٍ وَغَوَّاصٍ

(19) ^cUnşurī, Dīwān, p.278.

(20) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.468.

(21) Ibid, p.468.

Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Naml XXXIV, 18, 19.

﴿١٨﴾ حَتَّى إِذَا آتَوَا عَلَى وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا
يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ

أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحاً تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي
بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

- (22) Author unknown, *Qisaṣ al-'Anbiyā'*, (ed. Farydūn Taqī Zāda Ṭūsī), Tehran, 1363 H.sh., p.236.
- (23) Abū al-^cAtāhiya, *Dīwān*, p.112.
- (24) Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, p.906.
- (25) Manūchehrī, *Dīwān*, p.186.
- (26) Anvarī, *Dīwān*, p.374.
- Qur'ān*, Sūrat al-Naml XXXIV, 20-22.

﴿٢٠﴾ وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ
﴿٢١﴾ لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَاباً شَدِيداً أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَمَكَثَ
غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ

CHAPTER SIX

THE POETS' TREATMENT OF THE QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE

OF DHŪ-1-QARNAYN

In this, our penultimate chapter, we cover the Qur'anic tale of Dhū-1-Qarnayn (the two-horned one) - sometimes referred to as Alexander the Great. However, in keeping with the spirit of the Qur'anic narrative, we propose to refer to this figure throughout as Dhū-1-Qarnayn: he was reputed to have acknowledged Allah as the only deity in the Universe,⁽¹⁾ which places him, his function, as the leading player in the narrative, and his deeds in a more religious context than that historically associated with Alexander the Great.⁽²⁾ As a figure representing power, and possessing qualities of a fair-minded and just ruler derived solely from the strength gained through his faith in Allāh, his tale provides material readily adaptable by the poets for making comparisons with, and seeking to praise, a ruler in search of political legitimacy for his rule through divine sanction.

The figures of Gog and Magog, Dhū-1-Qarnayn's adversaries in the most extended episode, naturally also make a frequent appearance. In allegorical terms, Gog and Magog, two key figures in Muslim eschatology, came to symbolically represent in time those malign forces released, especially in the last days preceding the Final

Judgement, in order to lay waste the land.⁽³⁾ The image of the dam built by Dhū-l-Qarnayn as a barrier against Gog and Magog appears in all but three of the examples quoted below, confirming its importance as the centre-piece in the drama of the Dhū-l-Qarnayn tale.

As our departure point of the discussion, we may take the lines by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī which occur, predictably, in the context of madīḥ:

نعم چون پیل یکدیش هزار است	بشکل پیل یکدیش نگه کن
هوارا قامتش قد چنار است	زمین را هیکلش سد سکندر

(4)

'Look at him, (for) his appearance recalls exactly not one but, nay, a thousand elephants,
(So that) his body is like the dam of Dhū-l-Qarnayn,
Firmly fixed on earth, and his stature that of an Oak tree (soaring) into the sky.'

In the first hemistich, the poet, by way of establishing a context for comparison, imparts to his patron an exaggerated sense of power, achieved through the reference to the elephants, but qualifies and modifies this image by extending the comparison to include images of a dam and an oak tree to which he is likened also in the second hemistich. The dam, as the Qur'anic narrative relates, was constructed under the supervision of Dhū-l-Qarnayn to keep

out the rampant forces of Gog (Ya'jūj) and Magog (Ma'jūj). The portrayal of the patron as the personification of power as both an unyielding and unwavering figure is thus symbolized by the dam and the oak, becoming concrete manifestations of his presence. The patron, through this association principally with Dhū-l-Qarnayn, restores order and saves the valley people from the tyrants which ever threaten to inflict their evil on the Muslim polity and undermine the state. In this way, the (Muslim) community remains safe and impenetrable from the outside as long as its patron continues as its leader, placing himself symbolically like a dam between inhabitants and their enemies, his presence like the sturdy oak tree, inspiring confidence.

This feeling of impenetrability successfully conveyed in the imagery of Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's poem is reflected accurately also in the lines below by ^cUnşurī. Again, the images of an unbreachable barrier loom up, separating and protecting the community from its enemies, but this time the conflict is expressed in a theological context:

سپاه کبر بدو در چو لشکر یاجوج
نهاد آن دره محکم چو سد اسکندر

(5)

'Because of him (the patron)
The Magus army became like the troops
Of Gog -

The making of the valley like the dam of
Dhū-l-Qarnayn.'

The valley here becomes a symbol of a defence of Islam against outside incursions from foreign religions, in this case Mazdaism, known for its dualist doctrines. As in the Qur'anic narrative where the forces of Gog and Magog attempted each night to dig away in order to breach the barrier constructed by Dhū-l-Qarnayn, but failed each time, the Mazdaist⁽⁶⁾ armies likewise are portrayed here as failing to defeat the patron's armies whose function is to protect and spread Islam, the patron himself, who is being compared to the Dam, assuming the responsibility of thwarting the efforts of the state's enemies. ^CUnşurī shows a somewhat more subtle use of language here, suggesting his patron's function rather than explicitly stating it as does Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī above, the patron himself receiving divine sanction through this allusion because of the nature of his objective.

A better example of the poet's exploitation of the Qur'anic material dealing with the Tale of Dhū-l-Qarnayn is provided by ^CUnşurī in our next verse in which he describes for us the relationship between the patron's sword and the dam of Dhū-l-Qarnayn:

گر سکندر بر گذار لشکر یا جوج بر
کرد سدّ آهنین آن بود دستان آوری

سدّ تو شمشیر تست اندر مبارک دست تو

(7) کو سکندر گو بیا تا سدّ مردان بنگری

'Although Dhū-l-Qarnayn built an iron dam on the
passage of Gog, (but it is) a myth
Your dam is your sword in your blessed hand
Where is Dhū-l-Qarnayn's? Tell him to come and see
the dam of the brave men.'

The superiority of the patron's sword over the dam of Dhū-l-Qarnayn is reinforced by the greater purity and nobility of the material from which it is fashioned: pure, Indian steel famed for its hardness as compared with the adulterated elements, alloys of brass and iron from which the Dam was made. Once again, the image of defensive impenetrability presents itself in this verse: the Patron's sword has the function of warding off its enemies rather than being used as a force to extend the state's power over as wide an area as possible.

We may note in these past three examples, all by Persian poets, that their references to the tale of Dhū-l-Qarnayn as related in sūrat al-Kahf are quite explicit: the figures of Gog and Magog are directly invoked and manipulated alongside images of the patron to create a comparison that is favourable to him. al-Mutanabbī, however, conjures up

these images in praise of his patron merely through a subtle illusion to the character of Dhu-l-Qarnayn himself:

(8) لو كان ذو القرنين أعملَ رأيه لما أتى الظلماتِ صرنَ شموسا

'Had Dhū-l-Qarnayn heeded the advice of my Patron, when he entered the dark state Then it would have become as bright as the Sun.'

Here, the image of darkness, by virtue of the allusion to Dhu-l-Qarnayn, recalls the passage in the Sūra of al-Kahf in which he reaches the end of his march at the border separating good and evil, Islam and paganism. The poet's lines then conjure up in the reader's mind an image of evil forces whilst the image of light becomes at once a symbol of the patron's wisdom. Thus, we note a contrast in styles between the Arab poet, al-Mutanabbī, who is more economical in his expression and less given to the use of rhetoric than the Persian poets.

Farrukhī offers in the following lines another contrast between the image of darkness and light, inverting the normal associations of activity, power with darkness becoming a positive force:

(9) روز چون قارون همی نادید گشت اندر زمین
شب چو اسکندر همی لشکر کشید اندر زمان

'Daylight sank into the earth like Qārūn
And the night emerges to become like Dhū-l-
Qarnayn
Leading his armies.'

The reference to Qarun is traceable to the Sura of the Story, in which God caused the Earth to swallow him up. Thus, daytime is metaphorically eclipsed at the same time to the emergence of Dhū-l-Qarnayn's mighty army which, as the Qur'anic narrative has it, was dedicated to the removal of evil forces like Gog and Magog. In this context, their action serves to illuminate and thus brighten the darkness of the night, extending the world of Islam into new territory.

In two other works similar in theme to each other, both again within the thematic context of madīḥ, Farrukhī describes his patron as a traveller in the mould of Dhū-l-Qarnayn; in one, he praises his patron's sense of justice, expressed through the symbolic journeys he undertakes to destroy evil for the purpose of maintaining order in society:

درتلف کردن بدخواه و قوی کردن ملک

همچو اسکندر هر روز بود در سفری (10)

'Every time you travelled like Dhu-l-Qarnayn
To destroy evil people and strengthen the
Kingdom.'

and in the other he praises his patron's courage, again employing the metaphor of the traveller, whose qualities here slowly emerge over the extended period of the journey:

همه مردی آموختی و شجاعت جهان گشتن و تاختن چون سکندر (11)

'You have performed all the feats befitting a
brave
And masculine warrior, as you traversed the
World
Like Dhū-l-Qarnayn.'

Farrukhī, in the thematic context of madīh, makes reference to Dhū-l-Qarnayn by way of congratulating his patron Amir Abi Ya^cqub on the occasion of the birth of his son and chooses as a vehicle of his praise the palace of his patron:

ز برج او بتوان برد ز آسمان پروین ز بام او بتوان دید سد اسکندر (12)

'From the tower (of the palace) he can reach the
Star Pleides, and from its roof he can see the dam
Of Dhū-l-Qarnayn.'

conveying in the above lines an image of loftiness which cannot but be associated with its owner. The castle itself commands a high elevation from which the patron significantly looks down onto the dam built by Dhū-l-Qarnayn, whose height managed to reach the level of two

mountain sides. Thus, the patron's palace, by virtue of its more advantageous position, commands more importance than imparted to the Dam of Dhū-l-Qarnayn with which it is being compared, implying an importance which is correspondingly conferred on the figures associated with the palace and the Dam respectively.

Continuing in this vein, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī describes the relationship between the patron and the evil forces of Gog and Magog (here used as symbols of his enemy, the Seljūks) with the image of the dam of Dhū-l-Qarnayn once again featuring prominently:

کریاس ترا رفق تو ندارد درسد نو یا جوج وار بر کم (13)

'Your kindness did not serve as a breach (to
undermine your)
Rule) but became a dam itself (in defence)
Against those who resemble the (evil forces)
Of Gog and Magog.'

Thus, the quality of kindness, a potential weakness in any ruler's psychological makeup, is evoked here and given substance through a rhetorical transformation, denoting a person who is both just and resolute, as represented by two sides of his personality: one which he displays to his opponents, the other, reverse side, to his subjects. The verse parallels the tale of Dhū-l-Qarnayn as related in the

Qur'ān but, once again, the poet's treatment of the Qur'anic material takes on a political connotation, devoting little time and space to reflect the Islamic spirit contained in the story in the Qur'ān on which the above reference is based.

Anvarī, in a bold but equally subtle rhetorical flourish, praises his patron by describing the achievements of his army gained under his leadership in contrast to those of Dhū-l-Qarnayn:

نو که صد سیسکندر کنی از گرد سپاه خویشتن را سزدار صد چوسکندر شمری
(14)

'You have built a hundred dams, like the one of
Dhu-l-Qarnayn (all) from the dust of your army,
Indeed, you are worthy (now) to consider
yourself
The equivalent of a hundred Dhū-l-Qarnayns.'

The image of the dust, stirred up by the supposed activity of the patron's army, is suggestive of a dynamic power having been present in the area, but which has now moved on, and the measure of that dynamic power is represented by the ratio of the number of dams built by the patron to that constructed by Dhū-l-Qarnayn.

Two poems by Anvarī based on the Dhū-l-Qarnayn Qur'anic narrative throw some light on the nature of patronage as it obtained under the Persian court, describing above all the

relationship between patron and poet. In the first example, Anvarī appears to be displaying a natural servility, in which his oleaginous attitude shines through all too evidently:

قصداً آن کردم که ذوالقرنین نانی گویمت عفل گفت ای خاطر آسبب نقصان یافته
چون نگوئی هر چه ذوالقرنین ملک و ملک داشت هر غلامت از تو در هر مکرمت آن یافته
(15)

'I intended to call you the second Dhū-l-Qarnayn,

Wisdom said, Oh! Your mind is defected
Why don't you say (instead): that each boy
(Who has benefited) through your patronage
possesses
The equivalent to that owned by Dhū-l-Qarnayn.'

The patron's standing, however, is enhanced on such a hyperbolic level as to be so improbable, even by Persian standards, that one is tempted to view Anvarī's praise here as a cover for *hijā'* (mockery), in this case of a person whose power is in decline.

A more comic aspect of the poet's personality reveals itself in the second example in a *madīḥ* verse that includes within its lines a complaint about the poet's own status or, more accurately, the level of his salary:

حال من بنده و حوالت من گشت آب حیات و ذوالقرنین
(16)

'The relationship between my (physical) state
And my salary resembles the relationship
Between the eternal water and Dhu-l-Qarnayn.'

Readers of the tafsīr, with regard to the figure of al-Khiḍr, will know that whilst he managed to reach the eternal water and thus, by drinking it, obtain eternal life, Dhū-l-Qarnayn did not, suggesting that the latter's existence was not to be an everlasting one. Thus, through the poet's use of simile here we come to realize that a similar fate awaits the poet, suggesting that the patron may be delaying payment or not paying the poet at all.

- (1) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Kahf XVIII, 83-98.

﴿٨٣﴾ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٤﴾ إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَاتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبِيًّا ﴿٨٥﴾ فَاتَّبَعَ سَبِيًّا ﴿٨٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا
تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا قُلْنَا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّا أَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ
حُسْنًا ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ أَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا نُكْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَأَمَّا
مَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُ جَزَاءٌ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٨٩﴾ ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبِيًّا
﴿٩٠﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهَا سِتْرًا
﴿٩١﴾ كَذَلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩٢﴾ ثُمَّ اتَّبَعَ سَبِيًّا ﴿٩٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ
الْعُتْدَيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالُوا يَا ذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ
وَمَاجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿٩٥﴾
قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٦﴾ أَتُونِي زُبَرَ
الْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَعَلَهُ نَارًا قَالَ أَتُونِي أُفْرِغَ عَلَيْهِ
قِطْرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ فَمَا اسْطَاعُوا أَنْ يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا لَهُ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٨﴾ قَالَ هَذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّي
فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا .

See ^cAbd al-Na^cim Muḥammad, "Baḥth fī Qiṣṣat al-
'Iskandar dhī al-Qarnayn kamā sawwarahā al-'Adab
al-Fārsī al-'Islāmī", Hawliyyāt kulīyyat al-'Adāb,
Vol.XII, Cairo, 1969, pp.103-105., and Commentary
on Dhū al-Qarnayn in M. Assad, The Message of the
Qur'an, p.452.

- (2) Ibid, pp.105-127.
Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Kahf XVIII, 94-97.
- (3) A.J. Wensinck, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.IV, (old
ed.), Leiden, 1934, p.1142.
- (4) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.28.

- (5) ^cUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.79.
- (6) J. De Manasce, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, pp.562-563, Cambridge, 1968.
- (7) ^cUnṣurī, Dīwān, p.275.
- (8) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.143.
- (9) Farrukhī, Dīwān, p.333.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Ibid, p.148.
- (12) Ibid, p.129.
- (13) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.101.
- (14) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.469.
- (15) Ibid, p.429.
- (16) Ibid, p.381.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MISCELLANEOUS

In this section, we comment on the manner in which standard phrases not related to a particular context or narrative, such as tabāarak Allāh and na^cūd^h billāh are used in the dīwāns of the Arab and Persian poets under discussion.

But although such phrases are inevitably heterogeneous, their potential for being cited without contextual reference is already a common feature, and to this may be added a further important element justifying lumping them together, namely the functional difference that sometimes separates them from the Qur'anic materials analysed in the preceding chapter. There, broadly, Qur'anic references were incorporated into a discourse within which they either tended to enlarge the perspective by appealing, for example, to the exalted elements of prophetological narrative, or were themselves transformed by a process of metaphorical association. The phrases under consideration here, in contrast, even when occurring within the common area of madīh, are not always so integrated, standing often as straightforward utterances of pious intent, or declarations of God's power which may then be associated with the mamdūh elsewhere in the verse.

The extreme example of the literal approach to such phrases is provided, as might be expected, by the direct invocations so typical of Abū al-^cAtāhiya. He employs na^cūdḥ billāh, for example, in the conventional, religious sense, urging his audience to place their trust in God, the failure to do so inevitably falling on their shoulders:

نَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَذِي الْاِكْرَامِ مِنْ سُخْطِهِ وَنِقْمَتِهِ (1)

'We seek help from God, the Mighty, the Beneficent, from this Wrath and Vengeance.'

In using na^cūdḥ billāh in this particular manner, Abū al-^cAtāhiya confers on it a legitimacy in conformity with its Qur'anic context.

Another way Abū al-^cAtāhiya presses home the religious message contained in these common phrases is to endorse it by combining one or two with a Qur'anic verse, as evidenced in his use of al-ḥamd lillāh:

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الصَّمَدِ هُوَ الَّذِي لَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَلِدْ (2)

the poet introducing a verse taken from the Qur'ān, in this case Sura 37, which is all but, save one or two words, quoted verbatim, in order to emphasize God's transcendental

qualities.

How different is Abū Nuwās's treatment of al-ḥamd lillāh in the following verse, expressed in anything but a religious context:

أَمَّا الْمِكَّاسُ فَشَيْءٌ لَسْتُ أَعْرِفُهُ ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، فِي فِعْلٍ وَلَا رَاحِ
(3)

'I am unaware of this haggling
Both in spirit and deed
And Praise be to God (for that).'

Abū Nuwās uses the phrase in a casual manner as he seeks to disassociate himself from what appears to be a dubious act.

Anvarī also uses the term al-ḥamd lillāh to introduce madīḥ verse extolling the virtues of his patron and, in particular, attributing to him divine qualities which seem to place him above mere mortals in standing:

بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ نَهْزَانِ جَنْسِ اسْتِ قَدَرِشْ كِه دَر ذَاتِشْ نِهَايْتِ رَا مَحَالِ اسْتِ
(4)

'Thanks be to God that (the extent of) his
standing is not linked to that race, since his
being will endure forever.'

Manūchehrī's treatment of the term subḥān Allāh (Praise

the Lord) serves but as an opportunity to excel in the description of nature, thus:

سبحان الله جهان بینی چون شد دیگرگون باغ وراغ دیگرگون شد
(5)

'Praise be to God, do you not see how the state of the world, and the plateaus, are changed in aspect from one thing to another.'

Manūchehrī remains faithful in this rendition to the meaning of the Qur'anic original in both spirit and deed, associating God with the gardens and the plateaus in their glory by emphasizing, as the seasons change, the corresponding transformation of their aspect in both colour and shape. Thus the use of the phrase here is complimentary.

Of the three examples provided below of tabāarak Allāh, only one is used in its Qur'anic context, again, naturally, by Abū al-^CAtāhiya, whilst in the other two, by Abū Nuwās and Anvari, it is used in an exclamatory fashion, serving to introduce, and thus endorse through its religious association, verses in praise of their respective patrons.

Abū al-^CAtāhiya combines two common Qur'anic phrases, using tabāarak Allāh (God bless) in full, in combination with subhān Allāh (God be praised) where the use of the pronominal suffix in the latter case is used to avoid repetition:

تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ وَسُبْحَانَهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَدَّةٌ وَأَنْقِصًا (6)

'God is blessed and exalted. Everything has a term, and then must pass away.'

Contrast this pious statement with Abū Nuwās's laudation of Hārūn al-Rashīd:

تَبَارَكَ مَنْ سَاسَ الْأُمُورَ بِمُتَدَرِّجٍ
وَفَضَّلَ هَارُونَ عَلَى الْخُلَفَاءِ (7)

'Blessed is He who has directed all matters with (great) ability, and has preferred Hārūn to all other caliphs.'

where the same technique is used to radically different ends.

Anvarī's motive for using tabāarak Allāh resembles that of Abū Nuwās, for it once again serves merely to introduce a line in praise of his patron. This, incidentally, shows the poet at his most skilful in the use of metaphor:

تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَزْ أَنْ آبَ سِيرَ آتَشٍ فَعَلَ
كَهْ بَارَكَابِ تَوْخَا كَسَتْ وَبَاعَنَاتِ هَوَا (8)

'God's blessing for the fire of action which emerges from the water's flow
Which becomes earth beneath your steed, air at your bridle.'

Anvarī also provides us with an example of the use of na^cūd^h billāh (God save us, God forbid that we) to be effectively contrasted with an example of the zuhd poet, Abu al-^cAtahiya. The Persian poet inserts the phrase, not at the beginning as an exclamation, but after the object of the verse, tīgh-i kīnat, to achieve a full rhetorical effect; thus,

تیغ کینت نعوذ بالله ازو روح را چون بدن زند بدونیم (9)

'God save us from your sword of hate,
When it strikes the body it cuts the soul
into two halves.'

leaving us in no doubt of the patron's steely strength and ruthless manner, as embodied in his hatred made tangible through its metaphorical association with the sword, a force, the poet reminds us in the second hemistich, even God may not be able to protect us from.

The one example we have of astaghfir Allāh is employed by al-Mutanabbī, thus:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ لِشَخْصٍ مَضَى كَانِ نَدَاهُ مُنْتَهَى ذَنْبِهِ (10)

'I ask God's pardon on behalf of someone
who has passed away
As if (this were) his worst sin calling
out to him.'

Normally, astaghfir Allāh is used to ask for God's forgiveness in an exclamatory fashion, but is employed here partly also as an expression of condolence made on behalf of his patron, following the death of a near relative.

The Qur'anic phrases we now propose to discuss, kull man ^ḥalayhā fāni, kafā' Allāh al-mu'minīn al-qitāl and yawm tuṭwā al-samā' kaṭayy al-si_jil are less formulaic and less isolated from the remainder of the verse into which they are inserted. The phrase kull man ^ḥalayhā fanī (Everybody is going to die), for example, is invoked to emphasize the ephemeral nature of existence. Interestingly, Abu al-^ḥAtahiya, in his rendition, implies rather than directly refers to this phrase, when one would have expected the opposite, using the first word in its sequence only, kull, the poet then completing the hemistich with the active participle of the verb zāla which conveys the same meaning as and proves an effective substitute for the verb fana':

(12) يَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ كُلُّ زَائِلٌ نَحْنُ نَصَبٌ لِّلْمَقَادِيرِ الْجَوَارِ

'Worshippers of God, all (existence) is
fleeting
We are subject to the onslaughts of fate.'

Thus, the literal meaning of the Qur'anic phrase is essentially retained here despite the poet's choice of words.

But the following poet, Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, applies this phrase in his verse in anything but its literal meaning where it is cited in full as it appears in the Qur'ān, but placed in a somewhat different context:

کانش سہمیش رسیدہ بود بہر موز خواندہ براو کل من علیہا فان را

(13)

'His (patron's) fiery reputation
Preceded him to Hormuz
On which was recited (as a consequence)
The words "Everybody is going to die".

These Qur'anic words, in fact, constitute the crucial element in the verse, acting as a climax which functions both as a dire warning and as an expression of the patron's annihilating power, thus serving to complete, enhance and illumine the meaning of the verse. This realizes the objective of the poet which is to instil into the inhabitants of Hormuz a profound fear and respect of the patron; in addition, the use of kull man ^calayhā fanī provides the verse with that hyperbolic quality so typical of Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's poetry.

But Abū Nuwās, in his example below, restores the meaning of kull man ^calayhā fanī as expressed in the Qur'ān in a way that echoes Abū al-^cAtāhiya's usage:

(14) کُلّ مَذْخُورٍ سَيَفْنَى ؛ کُلّ مَذْکُورٍ سَيَنْسَى

'All that which is abundant will pass
away, All that
Which is memorable will be forgotten.'

not surprisingly, in view of the fact that the surrounding lines express similar ideas: the piece may therefore be assigned to the category of zuhd poetry which Abū Nuwās turned to late in life.

The Qur'anic reference kafā' Allāh al-mu'minīn al-qitāl (Allāh deflected their attack from the believers) provides us with an opportunity to show how skilfully both Arab and Persian poets use this kind of material. Anvari echoes here, by placing the Qur'anic phrase at the end, so that the impetus and the whole meaning of the verse depend upon it, the technique used by Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī in his treatment of kull man ^calayhā fanī:

چون گره بر ابروی قهرت زدند آسمان گوید کفی الله القتال
(16)

'If the enemy made you frown
The sky says "Allah will avert
Their attack from you".'

The word mu'minīn (believers) is not only omitted here for metrical reasons⁽¹⁷⁾ but to imply also that the

Patron's is taking their place, the reference to him being self-evident from the first hemistich.

Abū Tammām includes the whole phrase in the following verse, in a parallel story highlighting the evil of people envious of him and his mistress, in which they fall under the protection of God, reflected in the reference to the Qur'ān in which the believers also found themselves protected from the attacks of envious people:

فَاعْزِلُوا فِيهِ كَيْفَ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا
(18) قَدْ كَفَى اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ

'Gossip about him (i.e. her) as you will,
but say
Has God deflected their attack from the
believers.'

Abū Tammām here may be assuring a group of his friends but, in doing so, associates them with the believers and, by implication, the prophet himself, through his skilful use of the Qur'anic phrase.

Of the examples we have discussed so far, only Abū Nuwās, in his use of kull man ^calayhā fanī has shown a tendency to paraphrase. Below, however, we include a verse by Abu Tammam into which is skilfully worked the Qur'anic reference yawm tuṭwā al-samā' kaṭayy al-si'jil⁽¹⁹⁾ (The day

when the heavens rolled up as a recorder rolleth up a written scroll).

In his example, the unity of the phrase and its structural form is broken down into constituent parts; some words are modified and repeated, the use of the verb tayy, for example, and words are used in both hemistichs whilst some others are omitted, such as al-samā', and what is left is enhanced by the addition of the poet's own words, all expressed in the genre of lamentation, rithā'. Thus the poet idealizes in poetic form, as a speaker would do at a memorial service, the past achievements of his deceased master, in true hyperbolic fashion that one would normally associate with Anvarī or Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī:

طَوَى أَمْرَهُمْ عَنْوَةً فِي يَدَيْهِ
طَى السَّجِلَّ وَطَى الرِّدَاءِ (20)

'He (the patron) held (lit. rolled) their
fate in his hands unerringly
As a scroll has surely to be rolled
And a gown folded.'

Here, we can see that Abū Tammām has subjected this Qur'anic phrase to substantial paraphrasing in order to depict his patron as God's equal.

Manūchehrī's treatment also is hyperbolic in spirit in

praise of his patron but, in inserting the above Qur'anic phrase into his verse, he manages, unlike Abū Tammām, to retain the essential unity and Qur'anic meaning of the first part of the reference, although expressed in a very different context to the original:

ماند به ساعتی زیکی روز خشم تو

(21) آن روز کاسمان بنوردند همچوطی

'Truly your wrath (witnessed) over one hour
Resembles that day when the heavens will
be rolled up.'

The second part of the Qur'anic reference, namely to the 'recorder' and the 'written scroll' is omitted since it would not improve the image of the patron as a powerful being commanding a status equal to God himself.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

- (1) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.82.
- (2) Ibid, p.119.
- (3) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.904.
- (4) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.76.
- (5) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.182.
- (6) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.8.
- (7) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.360.
Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Rahmān LV, 78.
- (8) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.16.
- (9) Ibid, p.351.
- (10) al-Mutanabbī, Dīwān, p.58.
- (11) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Rahmān LV, 26.
- (12) Abū al-^CAtāhiya, Dīwān, p.155.
- (13) Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, Dīwān, p.1.
- (14) Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, p.977.
- (15) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-'Aḥzāb XXXIII, 25.
- (16) Anvarī, Dīwān, p.288.
- (17) The metre used here is ramal: fa^Cilalun fa^Cilatun
fa^Cilatun.
- (18) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.IV, p.255.
- (19) Qur'ān, Sūrat al-'Anbiyā' XXI, 104.
- (20) Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Vol.IV, p.19.
- (21) Manūchehrī, Dīwān, p.114.

CONCLUSION

We can see from the foregoing analysis that the utilization of Qur'anic material by ^CUnṣurī and his fellow Persian poets is far more extensive than undertaken by their ^CAbbasid predecessors, and that they exhibit evidence of a particular thematic development in their dīwāns that is not by any means due entirely to the imitation of Arabic models or their indebtedness to Arabic poetry in such technical areas as form and prosody, the principal themes exploited, and the stylistic and rhetorical techniques through which these are expressed.

Rather, this development reflects a distinct deviation from the Arabic model with the poets developing different techniques to those employed by their Arab counterparts, particularly in the genre of eulogy (madīḥ), in which the majority of poetry under discussion here is expressed, and a field which the Persians use to introduce innovations of their own. Given this point, the axis around which revolves the argument as to whether these Persian innovations can be considered a thematic development separate from that followed by the Arab poets, rests with the different approaches the Persians and Arabs adopt to praise their respective patrons, revealing, in the composition of the poetry, their respective cultural

attitudes towards the Qur'an from which the material is taken and exploited and, by implication, towards Islam itself, founded in the precepts contained in the Qur'ān. In particular, we are interested to know why the Arab poet showed a reluctance to exploit the Qur'ān's material to the full when, given his socio-religious background, he was ideally placed to do so, whilst his Persian counterpart, unreservedly and without inhibition, harnessed his knowledge of the Qur'an to the task in hand with admirable verve.

The answer in part must lie with the differences obtaining between the role and function fulfilled by the Arab and Persian poet in his respective society, a function that arises out of and confirms a poetic tradition which itself must form an integral part of the socio-religious and political structure if it is to develop and not fossilize. We will see to what extent the poet's function in this respect sets the parameters of his style, determining how the Qur'anic material will be presented in his work.

The function of the ^CAbbasid poet resembles in many ways that of his pre-Islamic forerunner, to extoll the virtues of him who leads yet is answerable to the community, the warrior/hero. With the advent of Islam, this figure is supported by the Caliph or one of his ministers, and the pagan society replaced by one given a religious dimension

with the Qur'ān standing at its heart. This society, however, continued to identify with one particular aspect of pagan civilization, its poetry. The gaṣīda indeed served as a model of poetic excellence to be imitated by succeeding Arab (and, later, Persian) poets alike. The language it gave expression to was used as a teaching aid to explain the more difficult passages in the Qur'ān. Through this association, poetry became acceptable in Islam and even took on a divine aspect, the exploitation of the material in the Qur'ān now becoming part of the Arab poetic tradition.

This development broadened the ʿAbbāsīd poet's choice of material at his disposal but limited his poetic function since, in the field of maḍīḥ at least, he was obliged to present an image of the Caliph which conformed to an Islamic ideal, confirming the community's expectations of him as defender of the faith and upholder of the divinely revealed law of Islam, the Shariʿah, which constitutionally, incidentally, limited his secular power. In short, the ʿAbbāsīd poet was not so much respectful of the Qur'ān when using its narratives in his poetry as wary of misinterpreting in his portrayals the precise nature of caliphal (or ministerial) power to be wielded by the mamḍūḥ, and the man he had to fear most should he fall short of the required standard in this respect was the Caliph himself. He had to take into consideration the

Caliph's accountability to the community founded on the precepts contained in the Qur'ān which the poet trawled for his material to shore up his master's/patron's rapidly diminishing secular power with divine sanction.

An illustration of the tentative attitude adopted by the ʿAbbasid poet in his exploitation of Qur'anic material for purposes of eulogy is provided by Abū Nuwās using the figure of Moses, casting his patron as an equal to God but in a manner sufficiently arcane as to escape the attention of the public.

In his comparison of Moses with his Patron, Mūsā, the poet seeks to veil his reference by allusion and suggestion, the Prophet's namesake serving as the focus of the narrative around which revolves the portrayal.⁽¹⁾ This propensity to allusion is a common characteristic of ʿAbbasid panegyric poetry shared by all the Arab poets under discussion here, saving one, the zuhd poet Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, the development of their style being encouraged and determined as much by social restraint as by aesthetic considerations.

Abū Nuwās, for example, can afford to be more flippant and less reserved in his treatment of Qur'anic material when working within the context of ghazal which allows more room for the expression of the poet's personal feelings, as evidenced in his portrayal of his beloved using the Solomon

figure as a means of comparison.⁽²⁾ However, the Arab poet is still obliged, when using Qur'anic material, to imply what the Persians can state openly.

The Persian poet indeed sits easily, in comparison with his Arab predecessor, in his seat as panegyrist, and is given carte blanche to exploit the material in the Qur'anic narratives at will, in particular those relating to the activities of Jesus, Moses, Solomon and Dhū-l-Qarnayn, in order to portray their patrons in the best possible light, unencumbered by the constraints that faced the Arab poets.

What is significant above all is that Persian lyrical poetry originated in the Court for the purpose of praising the princes, panegyric therefore constituting the *raison d'être* of the Persian poetry under discussion here.⁽³⁾ This poetry now expressed in New Persian, with its heavy overlay of Arabic vocabulary,⁽⁴⁾ was inspired in part by Arabic models as Manūchehrī frequently reminded his readers, on one occasion likening his she-camel to the throne of Bilqis and an *ʿifrīt*, the former reference evoking the bedouin's experience of desert life, the latter its mythology. Essentially, however, Persian lyrical poetry developed within an indigenous literary tradition based on two principal elements, the literature of the middle Persian period when all the important works of Persian literature were translated into Arabic following

the establishment of Islam in the region, coupled with a lively oral tradition whose origins go back to Sassanid oral poetry.⁽⁵⁾ It is to these origins, I believe, that Manūchehrī pays homage to in his allegorical poem on the vine, in which is invoked the figure of Jesus, with the immediate object of endorsing the rule of Khusraw.⁽⁶⁾

Thus, from the outset, the Persian poet was a propagandist representing his Patron as a semi-divine figure in whom was vested ultimate power and absolute sovereignty; he was the head of a hierarchical arranged society from whom issued, emanated or radiated downwards the attributes of justice, wisdom and generosity.

It was the Persian poet's function to maintain this image of the prince in the public mind. Abū 'l-Faraj-i Rūnī's example, for instance, combining the hūr image with a reference to other Qur'anic terms, amounts to a deification of his patron, presenting him as the embodiment of a cultural ideal underscored by divine sanction,⁽⁷⁾ the poet's elaboration here, by adorning the houris with pearls, proving crucial to the overall image of the patron. This embodiment takes various forms, as a writer with no compeer (Farrukhī) where his pen is likened to Moses' staff⁽⁸⁾ or as the owner of a palace which has no equal, Manūchehrī using the term firdaws as the image of comparison, cleverly echoing in a form re-arranged to suit his poetical purposes the repetition and accumulation of

the Qur'anic original.⁽⁹⁾

This idealization of the patron by the Persian poet extends to his accompaniments, his sword and pen in particular, both often likened to Moses' staff, thereby conferring divine sanction on, say, the exercise of dispensing justice, the patron's sword acting as the instrument through which the stability of the state is maintained, as in ^CUnşurī's verse.⁽¹⁰⁾ But the Persian poet here, in doing so, considerably alters the image invoked in the Qur'anic narrative of Moses' staff to suit his own poetical purposes, a practice denied to the Arab poet for the reasons explained above.

Time and time again the attributes of wisdom, justice and generosity are invoked through a reference to the divine activities of the prophets and represented as emanating from the patron/prince. Abū-'l-Faraj-i Rūnī, however, deviates from this use of Qur'anic figures to present a similar image of his patron as the embodiment of justice, invoking this time the Mahdī figure as a key term of comparison.⁽¹¹⁾ The Mahdī, according to Shi^Cite dogma will, following his disappearance, reappear on Judgement Day to right the injustices of this world. The patron, by virtue of this comparison, is not only seen to be taking on the qualities associated with this figure, deemed infallible and charismatic, to whom the Shi^Cite community

looked for guidance and leadership, but is placed above him, since he is seen also to pre-empt the Shi^Cite leader's function. This concept of religio-political authority was frequently adopted, somewhat conveniently, by the Sultān/prince, since the image of the Shi^Cite leader here is cast into an absolutist mould so beloved of Persian kings, and echoed ad infinitum throughout Persian poetry.

The Arab poet, by comparison, could never present his patron in such a light. Where a Persian prince is portrayed as dispensing justice, for example, his Arab equivalent is seen to restore it, as a natural birthright belonging to the people whom he represents, as in Abū Nuwās's rendition of the narrative of Moses,⁽¹²⁾ in which, significantly, a reference is made to one of the titles frequently adopted by the Caliph, Amīr al-Mu'minīn, in an attempt to present himself as a worthy and accepted temporal head of the religious community. Here, the poet is purely functional in his verse, epigrammatic and terse, displaying no ornate figures of speech.

The same Arab poet uses the paradisaical image of the hūr to emphasize his patron's generosity, imparting an earthliness (absent in the Qur'anic original) which is extended to become a general characteristic of a portrayal respectful in spirit but far from servile. Abū Nuwās displays elaboration of a kind associated with the Persian poets but at this point the similarity ends. Contrast the

above example with Farrukhī's rendition of the illumination of Mount Ṭūr as a term of comparison in the portrayal of his patron in which the level of hyperbole reaches Olympian proportions, the patron emerging from the portrayal occupying a position higher than that of God Himself.⁽¹³⁾

The priorities of the Arab poet thus clearly lay in a different area to those of the Persian poet, this influencing in part their respective styles. Both the Arab and the Persian have access to the use of similar verse forms and prosody but diverge stylistically in their respective use of rhetorical techniques. Anvari demonstrates, for example, a great command of technical artifice in his exploitation of Qur'anic material, referring openly here to his term of comparison, the hand of Moses. The verse itself contains a conditional sentence structure, a rhetorical interrogative, these elements then being made to shorten in a stretto to a climactic level at which the objective is achieved.

With the Arab poet being constrained to allude rather than refer openly to the Qur'anic figures, places and objects it becomes necessary for him to rely on his skill in manipulating language subtly rather than being a rhetorician juggling with ornate figures of speech, as al-Mutanabbī demonstrates in his invocation of several prophet figures to emphasize his patron's might⁽¹⁴⁾ through use of

parallelism and syntactic dependence.

The diaphanous, unfeeling image presented of the patron by the Persian poet is transferred to the beloved in the genre of ghazal. Farrukhī's invocation of the paradisaical term rawdāt riḍwān as a term of comparison for his beloved serves to provide us with a portrayal in which the image sparkles, coming to resemble - somewhat astonishingly - that of the patron affected within the genre of madīh, namely that she conforms to a cultural rather than a romantic ideal.⁽¹⁵⁾ Quite simply, this portrayal is devoid of that intimacy which can only be conjured up through suggestion. Here perhaps is the reason why ghazal appears more often in Arab rather than Persian dīwāns.

Contrast the above example, for instance, with the intimate sketch Abū al-^CAtāhiya provides us of his beloved, betraying in his portrayal a particular intensity of emotion suggested via the invocation of the paradisaical image.⁽¹⁶⁾ Thus the Arab poet here remains faithful, despite his zuhd leanings, to the function of the genre, unlike his Persian counterpart who, to broaden the discussion here, seems more preoccupied with how his mamdūh/beloved is to be perceived by the Court or the general public than with his relationship with him/her as both man and artist. The Persian's attitude thereby gave his utilitarian approach to the exploitation of Qur'anic material in his poetry often distorting, in the process,

the meaning of the Qur'anic original. Abū Nuwās, for his part, continues to imbue his portrayal of his beloved this time within an earthliness underscored here by perfection resulting from his association with the hūr al-^cīn.⁽¹⁷⁾

To move on from the ghazal verse of Abū Nuwās, in which he reveals his hedonist leanings, to the zuhd poetry of Abū al-^cAtāhiya is not so illogical as it first appears. Both these poets, working within the same Arabian poetic tradition, are subject to its laws and, by referring to the Qur'ān for material to exploit, share the same vocabulary. Despite working towards the achievement of different goals (the religious poetry of Abū al-^cAtāhiya in this respect offering an effective counterpoint to the secular poetry of Abū Nuwās and his fellow Arab panegyrists) the two poets share a common ground.

Abū al-^cAtāhiya reflects the teachings of the Qur'an in two ways: in the form of an appeal, du^c-ā', to the Muslim, where he draws heavily on paradisaical imagery for purposes of comparison, as in his use of jannat al-khuld, for example, (where the zuhd poet is not averse to indulging in a little hyperbole to press home his point).⁽¹⁸⁾, or in his use of such Qur'anic phrases as kull man ^calayhā fanī (everybody is going to die) for emphasis. Interestingly, Abū al-^cAtāhiya refers indirectly to the phrase, tentatively exploiting what he considers to be holy

material from the Qur'ān, but justifiably so in the light of his intentions. We find Abū Tammām, however, disposed to paraphrase the Qur'anic term yawm tutwā al-samā' kaṭayy al-si_jil (the day when we shall roll up the heavens as a recorder rolleth up a written scroll) in a substantial way, and to use it as a key element in a memorial of his deceased patron.⁽¹⁹⁾ The Persians predictably show no reluctance to exploit this aspect of Qur'anic material as evidenced in Anvarī's portrayal of his patron directly invoking tabāarak Allāh not for any religious motives but for technical reasons alone.⁽²⁰⁾ Thus here we are presented, in the way this Qur'anic terminology is exploited, with a touchstone by which the respective moral and aesthetic standards of the Arab poets can be judged in relation to those adopted by their Persian counterparts, the Arabs, including even Abū al-^CAtāhiya, disposed to allude in varying degrees to their material, the Persians exploiting it openly, to be used in the immortalization of their leaders.

FOOTNOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. p.115
2. pp.189-190
3. G. Lazard, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.IV, p.617
4. Ibid, pp.596-597.
5. J. De Manace, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol.III, (2), p.1167.
6. pp.168-176.
7. p.64.
8. p.134.
9. p.70.
10. pp.129, 130.
11. pp.164-165.
12. pp.127-128.
13. p.117.
14. p.158.
15. pp.92-93.
16. pp.96-97.

17. pp.94-96.

18. p.103.

19. p.234.

20. p.228.

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